

The Berea Baptist Banner

Displaying Biblical truth for twenty-six years in the printed page.

Advice to a Young Christian

By A Village Pastor - 1843
(John S. Taylor?)

FORMING AN ELEVATED CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Dear Young Reader---You are very young to profess the high character of a Christian; but your youth, while it serves as a caution, should not operate as a discouragement. Many a person of fewer years, and with less advantages, has not only given satisfactory evidence of conversion, but proved, in subsequent life, to be of that number whose **"path shineth more and more, unto the perfect day."**

It becomes you, however, to look narrowly into the evidences of such a change. A mistake here will prove fatal. The Word of God and prayer are the great means, which, if faithfully applied, will in due time develop your true moral character. If you have been deceived, if yet in your sins, these duties will ere long become irksome, and be loosely performed or utterly neglected. If you have been regenerated, you will not only persevere in these duties, but will find that they elicit more and more of your interest, until you arrive at a well-grounded hope of eternal felicity.

Taking for granted that you do not make this profession on slight grounds, nor with inadequate or erroneous views, my object, in a few letters which I shall address to you, will be to urge you to the formation of an elevated Christian character. You profess to have taken the first step in the strait and narrow way; but recollect, it is *only* the first step. The concentrated gaze of many eyes is upon you. Some would exult in your downfall--others rejoice in your advancement. Invisible and wicked spirits will tempt you to ruin. Good and guardian angels will watch around your steps, and

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Satan's Substitutes for Real Prayer

By Roy Mason
(1894 - 1978)

There is no greater privilege that belongs to a Christian than the privilege of prayer. Great as is this privilege, it is not exercised to any extent by many.

What is real, genuine, sure enough prayer? Prayer is talking to God, in the name of Jesus, under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and in the faith that one will be heard at the throne of grace. Note several Scriptures in this connection (Rom. 8:26; Matt. 21:22; Col. 4:2). There are several things concerning real prayer to be noted.

1. *Prayer is not to be ostentatious, but in large measure private.* (See Matt. 23:14).

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Christ and the Two Thieves

By J. C. Ryle
(1816 - 1900)

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Reader, you know these verses, I suppose. It would be strange indeed if you did not. Few passages in the New Testament are more familiar to men's ears.

And it is right and good that these verses should be well known. They have comforted many troubled minds. They have brought peace to many uneasy consciences. They have been a healing balm to many wounded hearts. They

have been a medicine to many sin-sick souls. They have smoothed down not a few dying pillows. Wherever the gospel of Christ is preached, they will always be honored, loved, and had in remembrance.

Reader, I wish to speak to you about these verses. Listen to me while I try to unfold the leading lessons which they are meant to teach. I cannot see the state of your heart before God, but I can see truths in this passage which no man can

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Bible Tells How God's Holy People Become Holy as God Is Holy

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

"As he that called you is holy, be also yourselves holy in all conduct; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15-16, improved translation.)

No doubt, so far as we know, God could, if He would, create a holy people without the use of means, as perhaps He used no means but His own Word and Spirit in creating the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6-9). But in fact He has chosen generally to work through means, and according to His own Word this is especially true in His work of redemption. His people were not designed to be robots, but to become partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:4).



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The Duty of Saints and Sinners with Reference to the Gospel

By Milburn Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

The Lord's church has been entrusted with the work of preaching the glorious gospel of the Son of God. I Thessalonians 2:4 declares: **"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."** What an exalted privilege to be allowed of God to be put in trust with the good news about Christ! It is God's gospel, but He has commissioned His churches and ministers to declare it to all people. It behooves us to be faithful stewards.

NOT ASHAMED OF IT

The child of God must not be ashamed

of the gospel. Paul said: **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"** (Rom. 1:16). There were many things which Paul may have been ashamed of. He may have been ashamed of his persecuting the church of God in his unconverted state. But he was not ashamed of the glad tidings of his Saviour, Jesus Christ. While the gospel was contemptible to the carnal eye, to Paul it was the only way of salvation for sinners. It was the great charter by which salvation was conveyed to them that believe. The gospel to Paul

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We spend our days now dealing with pain, grief, and sin but we as Christians look forward till that day we will no longer know grief, feel pain or sin.

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Editor: Christopher Cockrell

Staff: Sheron Cockrell, Marsha Kiser, Virginia
Cockrell

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The purpose of the *Berea Baptist Banner* is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

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Advice to a Young

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rejoice in your victories. To sustain *yourself* you have already been convinced is impossible. If you are regenerated, you are not perfectly sanctified; nor *will* you be until death shall be swallowed up in victory. But as Paul could do all things, by the strength of his Master, so can the weakest believer; and you must ever feel that the same grace which brought you "out of nature's darkness," must enable you to overcome your enemies, and "persevere unto the end."

As I have touched upon this point, I am forcibly reminded of the beautiful dream of John Newton, while lying at anchor in the harbor of Venice, and within sight of a part of the Alps. For the particulars I refer you to his volumes. The substance is as follows.

The anxiety of mind which he endured in his waking hours, seemed to give a coloring to his night-vision. He felt himself in great perplexity and horror. While musing on the wretchedness of his condition, there appeared suddenly a celestial figure, who presented to him a ring, which she said, if preserved with care, would, on every difficult occasion, resolve his doubts, and extricate him from trouble. He was overjoyed at the reception of it. All his fears seemed to subside, and a heavenly serenity to succeed. While in this tranquil and happy frame of mind, another personage, of less inviting aspect, made his appearance, and, after many flattering words and artful insinuations, prevailed on him to part with the ring. He deliberately dropped it over the side of the vessel, and it sunk to the bottom. The flames, in an awful manner, immediately burst from the mountain, and he seemed threatened with instant destruction. At this moment of horror, his celestial friend again appeared, and, with a frown of mingled love and reproof, upbraided him for listening to the voice of the tempter. She then descended into the water, and soon returned bearing the ring, and thus addressed him: "As thou art unable to keep this token, I will preserve it for thee, and it shall be secure for ever."

I have only given you from memory an outline of this beautiful vision. The interpretation which the author put upon it is full of spiritual instruction. If left for one moment to our own strength, how soon do we abandon the "ring," even at the first suggestion of the tempter. Then the soul is affrighted and dismayed. But Jesus, our Guardian, is able to restore the "ring," and lest we should lose it, He, in condescension to our infirmities, deigns to keep it. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," is His language. Thus, my dear young friend, intrust the "ring" to Him who alone is able to preserve it.

When the tempter comes, whether in the artful guise of what the world calls innocent pleasure, or the bold assaults of blasphemy and despair, look upwards to Him who is charged with the care of all that is precious to the soul. Wait not until you are overwhelmed by the consciousness of contracted guilt, but flee---oh, flee, as for your life, to Jesus. You cannot trust Him too confidently. He will permit you to sit even at His feet. There is honor, there is safety, there is happiness.

I congratulate you on the favorable circumstances in which you are placed for the formation of Christian character. The work of divine grace in which you profess to be a participant, is, I understand, still in progress. Doubtless you find some congenial spirits, with whom you can mingle feelings, unite in mutual prayer, and converse on the sweetest of all topics, the love of your Lord and Master. Let it be a principle with you, to select as your companions the most heavenly-minded of your sex. If such can be found in the higher walks of life, very well; be they your bosom friends: but, alas, how seldom, in the highest circles, does religion, in its native simplicity and purity, appear. You must seek it, I apprehend, in the low vale of obscurity, and often amid the homely attire of honest poverty. If you have the spirit of Christ, you will love His image, though arrayed in an humble garb. I know it has ever been the design of your parents to make you estimate character, not by riches, nor fashionable appearance, but by intrinsic moral worth; and I am persuaded that you must now feel, that if Providence has given you advantages of wealth and education above the plainest rustic, it is a ground of humility, inasmuch as it lays you under the greater obligations. Where "**much is given**"---oh, never forget it---"**much will be required.**" On this principle, are you not bound to be humble, benevolent, condescending?

In closing this letter, I must say to you as I lately said to a youth in my congregation, who is about making a public profession of her faith in Christ, "I hope you will not be satisfied with being half a Christian." So, my young friend, I would exhort you to aim high. It is a day to elevate the standard of piety. We want more Newels, and Huntingtons, and Ramsays, and Smelts. These were devoted souls. It was not half-way work with them. Religion was "**all in all.**" For this they lived, they suffered, and, supported by its consolations, they died. They have left a bright track for you to follow. Tread closely in their steps; and then, though you share in their sufferings, you shall also inherit, with them, the "**crown of glory.**"



Satan's Substitute

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2. *Prayer is to put God and the things of God first.* Note the model as given in Matt. 6:9.

3. *Prayer is to be in faith.* (See James 1:6).

4. *Prayer is to be persistent.* (Rom. 12:12 "**Continuing in prayer.**")

Many other things could be said about prayer, but let us next note some of Satan's perversion and substitutes through which he seeks to defeat people in their praying:

1. HE SEEKS TO GET SINNERS TO BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER. They do not, for it is true that "**no man cometh unto the Father but by me.**" A child of the devil does not have access to God as does the child of God. The only praying a lost person can do that amounts to anything, is the prayer that goes along with saving faith in Jesus, and it can be said that many a sinner does pray simultaneously with the exercise of faith in Jesus. The publican prayed according to the correct translation. "God be propitiated to me the sinner." Propitiation was through blood sacrifice, and his sacrifice pointed to Jesus Who should die in fulfillment of the sacrificial offering.

2. SATAN SEEKS TO GET PEOPLE TO "PRAY THROUGH TO SALVATION." This is impossible because salvation comes through faith in Christ---not through prayer. Often we have heard sinners instructed like this: "Get down on your knees and tell God that you are sorry, and ask Him to forgive you." This is the devil's way of salvation, for God cannot forgive the sinner's sins on any such basis. Such would leave Jesus and His atoning death out completely. Our sins are laid upon Jesus and borne by Him.

3. SATAN TURNS PRAYING INTO THE SAYING OF RITUALISTIC PHRASES. The Catholics count beads and "say prayers." This is the repetition of the same old thing over and over again, in violation of the words of Jesus, "**pray not as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.**" Memorized prayers are worth exactly nothing.

4. SATAN INDUCES PEOPLE TO PRAY CONTRARY TO THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD. Many are led to think that by wheedling God they can get Him to change His mind about things. The Bible says, "**Thou shalt not steal.**" That is God's revealed will. What does it profit therefore to pray for the privilege of stealing something that one may come to want? The Lord reveals that a woman is prohibited from speaking in a mixed assembly of men and women, and says that it is a shame to do

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From the Pen of a Country Preacher

Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)



A Study of Genesis 3:15

Many great truths are taught in this sacred text. Let us see just how many truths we can discover in this one verse. Here we have the first promise of a Redeemer. Eve was told that through her seed one would come who would restore man to a peaceable relationship with his Maker.

The first truth I notice is that Adam and Eve were saved by faith in the coming Redeemer. This was the way that God saved our first parents and all the Old Testament saints. Those in the Old Dispensation looked forward to the coming Redeemer; today we look back to the coming of the Redeemer. In the Old Testament there was set forth a prospective Christ; in the New Testament there is set forth a retrospective Christ.

The second thing I observe is the contest of the ages. The text states that there is to be enmity between God and Satan, between the children of God and the children of that Wicked One. Here is the beginning of a perpetual quarrel between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Devil.

Even a brief knowledge of human history proves that the story of man is one of struggle. Human history is not only a struggle between man and man; it is a struggle between supernatural forces which involves deep moral and spiritual issues. This age-long battle is between right and wrong, between death and life, between truth and error, between liberty and oppression, between need and greed, between darkness and light.

Can anyone keep from seeing the powers of evil and good working among Cain and Abel? The flood, Babel, and Sodom are all monuments of the contest of the ages. Israel was torn between these forces. Throughout the old dispensation Satan was constantly trying to destroy the seed of the woman that would bring Christ into the world. But when the fullness of time was come, the Promised Seed of the woman was born. Satan, having failed to prevent His birth, tried to destroy Him before He reached the cross. He tried to get Him killed by numerous means. And even today the story of the Christian church is but one long story of this terrible conflict between God and the Devil.

This war will continue as long as there is a godly man this side of Heaven and a wicked man on this side of Hell. As far as man is concerned, the high point of this battle will be reached in the near future

at Armageddon. In the spirit world, the turning point will be the war in Heaven when the good angels will exclude Satan and the evil angels from the heavens. Then after the Battle of Gog and Magog, Satan and his angels will be confined to the Lake of Fire, and this age-long war will end for ever.

The third truth I see is that of the incarnation and virgin birth of the promised Seed. Christ is here called the "seed of the woman." By woman we are to understand Eve; therefore Christ's genealogy in Luke goes so far as to show Him to be the son of Adam.

Observe that Christ was to be the seed of a woman, not the seed of a man and a woman. This is closely related to what Isaiah said; **"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** Paul strengthened these prophecies by saying: **"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law"** (Gal. 4:4).

Behold God magnifying His grace! Even though the woman was first in the transgression, yet she shall be saved by child-bearing; that is, by the promised seed who shall descend from her (I Tim. 2:15).

The fourth fact I see is that of the sufferings and death of Christ. Satan is to bruise the heel that is to crush him. Notice the statement: **"Thou shalt bruise his heel."** His heel has reference to His human nature. Christ's heel was bruised when His feet were pierced and nailed to the cross.

It was the Devil who put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ. It was Satan who prompted Peter to deny the Son of the Highest. . . put it in the heart of the chief priests to persecute Him. . . of Pilate to condemn Him. By this Satan aimed at Christ destruction and the ruin of blood redemption. Yet in all this Satan only bruised Christ's heel, and it was by death that Christ **"destroy(ed) him that had the power of death"** (Heb. 2:14). The death of Christ rendered a fatal and incurable blow to the kingdom of Satan. Ever since Calvary the Devil has been a defeated foe. Paul described Christ's great victory over Satan by saying: "He rid himself of all the powers of evil, and held them up to open contempt, when he

celebrated his triumph over them on the cross" (Col. 2:15 T.C.T.).

I see here also a prophetic utterance which points to a time in the future. The text said that **"it (the woman's seed, Christ) shall bruise your head."** A serpent's poison is lodged in its head and a bruise there is fatal. In Romans 16:20, Paul said: **"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."**

Genesis 3:15 reveals both the first and second coming of Christ. He was to come the first time as the Spirit-conceived seed of the woman to have His heel bruised by Satan and to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He is to come the second time to bruise the head of the serpent. The future destruction of Satan is going to be fatal.

In our text God said to the serpent: **"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."** Now the seed of the woman was Christ, then the seed of the serpent must be Antichrist. Here I see the Mystery of Godliness and the Mystery of Iniquity. The Mystery of Godliness was Christ manifested in the flesh. The Mystery of Iniquity is Antichrist. As Christ was born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit, so Antichrist will be born of a woman by Satan. As Christ was the Son of God, so Antichrist will be the son of Perdition.



Satan's Substitute

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so. (See I Cor. 14:34-36). We recall asking a woman preacher how she got around this, and she explained that she "prayed about it" and got cleared to go ahead and preach. Do you believe that the Lord will privately tell a person to go ahead and do something, which He has publicly declared in His Word that He does not want done?

5. SATAN INDUCES PEOPLE TO SUBSTITUTE PRAY FOR WORK WHICH THEY OUGHT TO BE DOING. Many a person prays for some person rather than deal with them personally when they have the opportunity. People pray for souls to be saved, then decline to let the Lord use them in the visitation program of the church. Prayer will not excuse personal laziness.

6. SATAN GETS PEOPLE TO HAVE FAITH IN PRAYER. Many say, "Oh I have a lot of faith in prayer. . ." Faith in prayer is faith in the saying of words---in yourself in other words. Our faith is to be in GOD---not in the exercise of prayer.

7. SATAN FOOLS PEOPLE INTO THINKING THAT THEY CAN BE HEARD IN PRAYER, when they refuse to speak to some other Christian with whom they are at outs. Jesus said, **"When ye stand praying, forgive if ye**

have ought against any. . ."

8. SATAN INDUCES SELFISH PRAYING. James said, **"Ye receive not because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it on your lusts."**

LOOKOUT, LEST SATAN DEFEAT YOU, EVEN IN YOUR PRAYING!



2005-2006 BOUND VOLUMES

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2005-2006 BOUND VOLUMES

Duty of Saints and

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was **"the arm of the Lord,"** the power of God to heal spiritual maladies.

Are you, dear fellow-believer, ashamed of the gospel? Do you declare it to your friends and neighbors? Are you constantly going to hear it preached in a New Testament church? Or do you speak to people about the weather or politics? If you must bear news to others, be sure it is the good news of how a sinner is saved by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

READY TO DECLARE IT

It is the duty of every believer to be ready to witness of the saving power of the gospel. To the Romans Paul said: **"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also"** (Rom. 1:14-15).

Do you pay your debts? If you say yes, what about the gospel debt? Are you striving to preach the whole gospel to the whole world? Are you witnessing to your neighborhood? Supporting missionaries who preach the gospel? If you must say no to the paying of this debt, then you have not paid the greatest of all your debts! How wonderful if every believer would say concerning this debt: **"As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel!"**

The Head and Founder of the church gave it its marching orders in Mark 16:15 when He commanded: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."** It is not the business of the church to save every lost creature in the world. But it is our business to preach

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the gospel to every human creature that is capable of receiving it. We are obligated to preach it in all places and to all persons. This we must do in each generation and until Christ comes. According to II Corinthians 10:16 we are to **“preach the gospel in the regions beyond.”** Luke 24:47 says it is to be preached **“among all nations”** and Acts 1:8 says to **“the uttermost part of the earth.”**

PREACHERS MUST PREACH THE GOSPEL

While it is the duty of every believer to preach the gospel, it is the special duty of every God-called preacher to preach it even more so. Paul spoke of this to the Corinthians: **“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me”** (I Cor. 9:16).

Paul did not feel bound to preach the glory of some religious denomination. He did not spend all his time preaching some religious program made by an earthly religious headquarters. He was duty-bound to preach the gospel. He was not at liberty to quit at his pleasure, or retire when he was sixty-five. If he did this duty well, if he did it willingly, he would receive a reward for his labor. Jesus Christ promised: **“Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it”** (Mark 8:35).

LABOR TO GET IT OUT

Christians are to labor to get the gospel out. Paul referred to Timothy as his **“fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ”** (I Thess. 3:2). To the Philippians he mentioned the **“women which laboured with me in the gospel”** (Phil. 4:3). These women were not ministers of the gospel. They helped Paul in his preaching of the gospel by supporting him and entertaining him in their homes.

It is the privilege of every believer to be what III John 8 calls a **“fellowhelpers to the truth.”** We learn from I Corinthians 3:9 that we **“are laborers together with God.”** II Corinthians 5:20 reads: **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”** We must see that the gospel is preached. We cannot save men; we cannot make them new creatures. But we can declare the gospel unto them.

LIFE SHOULD BECOME IT

Our daily life should be such as would cause men to respect the gospel which we believe and declare. We are commanded in Philippians 1:27: **“Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.”** It is an ornament to our profession when our manner of

life is agreeable to the gospel. Those who believe gospel truths must live by gospel rules and depend upon gospel promises. By doing this we can strive **“together for the faith of the gospel”** (Phil. 1:27).

MUST NOT HINDER IT

Believers must not do anything to hinder the gospel. Paul declared: We. . . **“suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ”** (I Cor. 9:12). All we do should serve the interests of the gospel and promote the salvation of souls. Paul knew the Lord had **“ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”** (I Cor. 9:14). But he renounced this right that he might not hinder the gospel. He said in I Corinthians 9:18: **“Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.”**

SHOULD DEFEND IT

It is our duty to defend the gospel, for Philippians 1:17 says we are **“set for the defense of the gospel.”** If we are to propagate the gospel in the world, we must defend it against the violence and opposition of its enemies. We must expose those who pervert it as heretics. We must defend it to the death, if necessary.

UNSAVED CANNOT BELIEVE IT

The gospel is ineffectual to some. We are told in II Corinthians 4:3-4: **“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”**

The problem is not in the gospel, for it will forever remain the power of God unto salvation. Nor is its ineffectiveness in those who preach it. Christ came to save the lost, and the gospel of Christ is sent to save such. If men are not saved by it, they are lost forever. The hiding of the gospel is the cause of the ruin of lost sinners.

The devil, the god this world worships, blinds the minds of men to the glad tidings of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. He blinds them to the very gospel by which they must be saved. He increases their prejudice and blinds their understanding lest **“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”** (II Cor. 4:4). Satan does this to hinder the gospel from causing men to discover the glory of God in salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. For by the gospel those who are in darkness become lights in the Lord (Eph. 5:8).

Here we are able to see the total depravity of man. The unregenerate man is ignorant of the saving power of the gospel. I Corinthians 1:18 declares: **“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”** Since man is blind to the very gospel by which he must be saved, then I am able to see that unless God does something

for him he is lost eternally. Ephesians 2:1 tells us the lost man is **“dead in trespasses and sins.”** Ephesians 4:18 discloses he is **“alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart.”** Romans 5:6 says he is **“without strength.”**

The condition of man necessitates the quickening work of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Spirit quickens the natural man, he can never believe the gospel. He can never repent of his sins. He will never turn to God. This is why I read in Ephesians 2:1 these words: **“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”** John 6:63 declares: **“It is the Spirit that quickeneth.”** The natural man can only see the beauty of the Christ of the gospel when his Satan-blinded eyes are opened by the Spirit of God. It is written in Psalms 146:8: **“The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind.”** It is written again in Proverbs 20:12: **“The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.”**

THOSE WHO OBEY NOT

But what about those who obey not the gospel, those who die rejecting the Christ of the gospel? In I Peter 4:17 the question is raised: **“What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”** The answer to this question is found in II Thessalonians 1:7-9. The passage speaks of the time **“when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”**

The Second Coming of Christ is the doom of those who reject the gospel message. These will be punished according to their works. They will suffer everlasting destruction of their bliss, not being. The punishment inflicted by an everlasting God upon an immortal soul runs parallel with the line of eternity. Gospel-rejecters are set out of the reach of Divine mercy and grace forever.

Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe He died for your sins in fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures? Do you believe He was buried? That He rose again the third day? If your answer is yes, you are saved from your sins, for the gospel **“is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”** (Rom. 1:16). But while the gospel is a savor of life unto life unto you, it is a savor of death unto death to the unbeliever.

If you do not believe the gospel, the good news about salvation by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you are yet in your sins. You are a gospel-rejecter. God will be glorified by your everlasting suffering in the fires of Hell!

In Luke 8:12 I read: **“Those by the**

way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” Here I see three truths: First, a man cannot be saved without believing the gospel. Second, it is possible for a man to believe the gospel and be saved by simple faith in it. Third, the devil does all he can to keep a person from believing the gospel. Satan tries to prejudice the unsaved man’s mind against it, for he knows it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.



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ever know too well.

I. First of all, you are meant to learn from these verses *Christ’s power and willingness to save sinners.*

This is the main doctrine to be gathered from the history of the penitent thief. It teaches you that which ought to be music in the ears of all who hear it; it teaches you that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.

I ask you if any man’s case could look more hopeless and desperate than that of this penitent thief once did?

He was a *wicked man*, a malefactor, a thief, if not a murderer. We know this, for such only were crucified. He was suffering a just punishment for breaking the laws. And as he had lived wicked, so he seemed determined to die wicked, for when he first was crucified he railed on our Lord.

And he was a *dying man*. He hung there, nailed to a cross, from which he was never to come down alive. He had no longer power to stir hand or foot. His hours were numbered. The grave was ready for him. There was but a step between him and death.

If ever there was a soul hovering on the brink of hell, it was the soul of this thief. If ever there was a case that seemed lost, gone, and past recovery, it was his. If ever there was a child of Adam whom the devil made sure of as his own, it was this man.

But see now what happened. He ceased to rail and blaspheme, as he had done at first. He began to speak in another manner altogether. He turned to our blessed Lord in prayer. He prayed Jesus to “remember him when he came into his kingdom.” He asked that his soul might be cared for, his sins pardoned, and himself thought of in another world. Truly this was a wonderful change.

And then mark what kind of answer he received. Some would have said he was too wicked a man to be saved. But it was not so. Some would have fancied it was too late---the door was shut, and there was no room for mercy. But it proved not too late at all. The Lord Jesus returned

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him an immediate answer, spoke kindly to him, assured him he should be with Him that day in paradise, pardoned him completely, cleansed him thoroughly from his sins, received him graciously, justified him freely, raised him from the gates of hell, gave him a title to glory. Of all the multitude of saved souls, none ever received so glorious an assurance of his own salvation as did this penitent thief. Go over the whole list from Genesis to Revelation, and you will find none who had such words spoken to them as these: **"To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."**

Reader, the Lord Jesus never at any other time gave so complete a proof of His power and will to save as He did upon this occasion. In the day when He seemed most weak, He showed that He was a strong deliverer. In the hour when His body was racked with pain, He showed that he could feel tenderly for others. At the time when He Himself was dying, He conferred on a sinner eternal life.

Now have I not a right to say, Jesus **"is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him?"** Behold the proof of it. If ever a sinner was too far gone to be saved, it was this thief. Yet he was plucked as a brand from the fire.

Have I not a right to say, "Christ will receive any poor sinner who comes to Him with the prayer of faith, and cast out none?" Behold the proof of it. If ever there was one that seemed too bad to be received, this was the man. Yet the door of mercy was wide open even for him.

Have I not a right to say, "By grace ye may be saved, through faith, not of works: fear not, only believe?" Behold the proof of it. This thief was never baptized. He belonged to no visible Church. He never received the Lord's Supper. He never did any work for Christ. He never gave money to Christ's cause. But he had *faith*, and so he was saved.

Have I not a right to say, "The youngest faith will save a man's soul, if it only be true?" Behold the proof of it. This man's faith was only one day old; but it led him to Christ, and preserved him from hell.

Why then should any man or woman despair, with such a passage as this in the Bible? Jesus is a Physician who can cure hopeless cases. He can quicken dead souls, and call the things which be not as though they were.

Never should any man or woman despair. Jesus is still the same now that He was eighteen hundred years ago. The keys of death and hell are in His hand. When He opens none can shut.

What though your sins be more in number than the hairs of your head? What though your evil habits have grown with your growth, and strengthened with your strength? What though you have

My Dad

As I knelt down before the Lord to pray,
I could only think of my Dad today.
I spoke to the Lord and told Him I was sad,
And told Him how much I really missed my Dad.

I spoke to Him how he was my Pastor and Teacher,
How he told me about all of God's wonderful creatures.
He taught me the Bible, and that made me glad,
But Lord, I sure do miss my Dad.

I talked to my Mom about the things he used to do,
She held me and comforted me and said I miss him too.
We remember the times he preached from place to place,
Oh Lord, how I miss my Dad's smiling face.

I picture him preaching from the pulpit everything that's true,
And, yes, Lord, I know that he's right there with you.
I love him, I miss him, I mean really bad.
Forgive me, Lord, but I do miss my Dad.

He was stern and taught me to make the right choice,
He did even more, without raising his voice.
I would tease him and tell him how blessed he was to have me,
But I said how I wish I could sit on his knee.

The white hair on his head showed he was wise,
And thinking of him, Lord, still makes me cry.
I know that he's with you and that makes me glad.
But I can't say it enough Lord, I really miss my Dad.

He spoke to me, Lord, of that heavenly place,
And how you could save me by your wonderful grace.
I believed what he said, the gospel is true,
And one day I know, I'll be with him and with you.

But until that day comes I'll still miss him the more,
Until that great day I come through that great door.
I ended my prayer even though I was still sad,
I then asked the Lord to please take care of my Dad.

By Roger D. Reed

hitherto hated good, and loved evil, all the days of your life? These things are sad indeed; but there is hope even for you. Christ can heal you. Christ can cleanse you. Christ can raise you from your low estate. Heaven is not shut against you. Christ is able to admit you, if you will humbly commit your soul into His hands.

Reader, *are your sins forgiven?* If not, I set before you this day a full and free salvation. I invite you to follow the steps of the penitent thief--come to Christ, and live. I tell you that Jesus is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. I tell you He can do everything that your soul requires. Though your sins be as scarlet, He will make them white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Why should you not be saved as well as another? Come unto Christ by faith, and live.

Reader, *are you a true believer?* If you are, you ought to glory in Christ. Glory not in your own faith, your own feelings, your own knowledge, your own prayers,

your own amendment, your own diligence. Glory in nothing but Christ. Alas! the best of us knows but little of that merciful and mighty Saviour. We do not exalt Him and glory in Him enough. Let us pray that we may see more of the fullness there is in Him.

Reader, *do you ever try to do good to others?* If you do, remember to tell them about Christ. Tell the young, tell the poor, tell the aged, tell the ignorant, tell the sick, tell the dying---tell them all about Christ. Tell them of His power, and tell them of His love. Tell them of His doings, and tell them of His feelings. Tell them what He has done for the chief of sinners. Tell them what He is able to do to the last day of time. Tell it them over and over again. Never be tired of speaking of Christ. Say to them broadly and fully, freely and unconditionally, unreservedly and undoubtingly, "Come unto Christ, as the penitent thief did---come unto Christ, and you shall be saved."

II. The second lesson you are meant to learn from this passage is this, *If some are*

saved in the very hour of death, others are not.

This is a truth that never ought to be passed over, and I dare not leave it unnoticed. It is a truth that stands out plainly in the sad end of the other malefactor, and is only too often forgotten.

What became of the other thief that was crucified? Why did he not turn from his sin, and call upon the Lord? Why did he remain hardened and impenitent? Why was he not saved? Let us be content to take the fact as we find it, and see what it is meant to teach us.

We have no right whatever to say this thief was a worse man than his companion. There is nothing to prove it. Both plainly were wicked men. Both were receiving the due reward of their deeds. Both hung by the side of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both heard Him pray for His murderers. Both saw Him suffer patiently. But while one repented, the other remained hardened. While one began to pray, the other went on railing. While one was converted in his last hours, the other died a bad man, as he had lived. While one was taken to paradise, the other went to his own place, the place of the devil and his angels.

Now these things are written for our warning. There is warning as well as comfort in these verses, and that very solemn warning too.

They tell me loudly, that though some may repent and be converted on their death beds, it does not at all follow that all will. A death bed is not always a saving time.

They tell me loudly that two men may have the same opportunities of getting good for their souls, may be placed in the same position, see the same things, and hear the same things, and yet only one shall repent, believe, and be saved.

And it is good and profitable to bear this in mind. There is an immense amount of delusion in the world on this very subject. I see many allowing life to slip away, all unprepared to die. I see many allowing that they ought to repent, but always putting off their own repentance. And I believe one grand reason is that most men suppose they can turn to God just when they like. They wrest the parable of the laborer in the vineyard, which speaks of the eleventh hour, and use it as it never was meant to be used. They dwell on the pleasant part of the verses I am now considering, and forget the rest. They talk of the thief that went to paradise, and was saved, and forget the one who died as he had lived, and was lost.

Reader, take heed that you do not fall into this mistake. Look at the history of men in the Bible, and see how often these notions I have been speaking of are contradicted. Mark well how many proofs there are that two men may have the same light offered them, and only one

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use it; and that no one has a right to take liberties with God's mercy, and presume he will be able to repent just when he likes.

Look at the world around you. See what is going on continually under your eyes. Two sisters will often attend the same ministry, listen to the same truths, hear the same sermons; and yet only one shall be converted to God, while the other remains totally unmoved. Two friends often read the same religious book. One is so moved by it that he gives up all for Christ--the other sees nothing at all in it, and continues the same as before.

You must not misunderstand me. I do not want to discourage you. I say these things in all affection, to give you warning of danger. I do not say them to drive you back from Heaven; I say them rather to draw you on, and bring you to Christ while He can be found.

I want you to beware of presumption. Do not abuse God's mercy and compassion. Do not continue in sin, I beseech you, and think you can repent, and believe, and be saved, just when you like, when you please, when you will, and when you choose. I would always set before you an open door. I would always say, while there is life there is hope. But if you would be wise, put nothing off that concerns your soul.

You may say, perhaps, "It is never too late to repent." I answer, That is right enough, but late repentance is seldom true.

You may say, "Why should I be afraid? ---the penitent thief was saved." I answer, That is true, but look again at the passage, which tells you that the other thief was lost.

III. The third lesson you are meant to learn from these verses is this: *the Spirit always leads saved souls in one way.*

This is a point that deserves particular attention, and is often overlooked. Men look at the broad fact that the penitent thief was saved when he was dying, and they look no further.

They do not consider the evidences this thief left behind him. They do not observe the abundant proofs he gave of the work of the Spirit in his heart. And these proofs I wish to trace out. I wish to show you that the Spirit always works in one way: and that whether He converts a man in an hour, as He did the penitent thief, or whether by slow degrees, as He does others, the steps by which He leads souls to Heaven are always the same.

Listen to me, reader, and I will try to make this clear to you. I want you to shake off the common notion that there is some easy royal road to Heaven from a dying bed. I want you thoroughly to understand that every saved soul goes through the same experience, and that

the leading principles of the penitent thief's religion were just the same as those of the oldest saint that ever lived.

See, then, for one thing, *how strong was the faith* of this man.

He called Jesus "**Lord.**" He declared his belief that He would have a kingdom. He believed that He was able to give him eternal life and glory, and in this belief prayed to Him. He maintained His innocence of all the charges brought against Him. "**This man,**" said he, "**hath done nothing amiss.**" Others, perhaps, may have *thought* the Lord innocent, --none *said* so openly but this poor dying man.

And when did all this happen? It happened when the whole nation had denied Christ, ---shouting, "**Crucify him, crucify him;**" we have no king but Caesar, ---when the chief priests and Pharisees had condemned and found Him guilty of death, ---when even His own disciples had forsaken Him and fled, ---when He was hanging, faint, bleeding, and dying, on the cross, numbered with transgressors, and counted accursed. This was the hour when the thief believed in Christ, and prayed to Him. Surely such faith was never seen since the world began.

The disciples had seen mighty signs and miracles. They had seen the dead raised with a word, and lepers healed with a touch, ---the blind receiving sight, ---the dumb made to speak, ---the lame made to walk. They had seen thousands fed with a few loaves and fishes. They had seen their Master walking on the water as on dry land. They had all of them heard Him speak as no man ever spake, and hold out promises of good things yet to come. They had some of them had a foretaste of His glory in the mount of transfiguration. Doubtless their faith was the gift of God, but still they had much to help it.

The dying thief saw none of the things I have mentioned. He only saw our Lord in agony and in weakness, in suffering and in pain. He saw Him undergoing a dishonorable punishment, deserted, mocked, despised, blasphemed. He saw Him rejected by all the great, and wise, and noble of His own people, ---His strength dried up like a potsherd, ---His life drawing to the grave. He saw no sceptre, no royal crown, no outward dominion, no glory, no majesty, no power, no signs of might. And yet the dying thief

believed and looked forward to Christ's kingdom.

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark the question I put to you this day: ---Where is your faith in Christ?

See, for another thing, *what a right sense of sin* the thief had. He says to his companion, "**We receive the due reward of our deeds.**" He acknowledges his own ungodliness, and the justice of his punishment. He makes no attempt to justify himself, or excuse his wickedness. He speaks like a man humbled and self-abased by the remembrance of past iniquities. This is what all God's children feel. They are ready to admit they are poor, hell-deserving sinners. They can say with their hearts, as well as with their lips, "We have left undone the things that we ought to have done, and we have done those things that we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us."

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then mark my question: ---Do you feel your sin?

See, for another thing, *what brotherly love* the thief showed to his companion. He tried to stop his railing and blaspheming, and bring him to a better mind. "**Dost not thou fear God,**" he says, "**seeing thou art in the same condemnation?**" There is no surer mark of grace than this. Grace shakes a man out of his selfishness, and makes him feel for the souls of others. When the Samaritan woman was converted, she left her water-pot and ran to the city, saying, "**Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?**" (John 4:29). When Saul was converted, immediately he went to the synagogue at Damascus, and testified to his brethren of Israel that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 9:20).

Reader, would you know if you have the Spirit? Then where is your charity and love to souls?

In one word, you see in the penitent thief a finished work of the Holy Ghost. Every part of the believer's character may be traced in him. Short as his life was after conversion, he found time to leave abundant evidence that he was a child of God. His faith--his prayer--his humility--his brotherly love--are unmistakable witnesses of the reality of his repentance. He was not a penitent in name only, but in deed and in truth.

Let no man, therefore, think, because the penitent thief was saved, that

men can be saved without leaving any evidence of the Spirit's work. Let such an one consider well what evidences this man left behind, and take care.

It is mournful to hear what people sometimes say about what they call *death-bed evidences*. It is perfectly fearful to observe how little satisfies some persons, and how easily they can persuade themselves that their friends are gone to Heaven. They will tell you, when their relation is dead and gone, that "he made such a beautiful prayer one day, ---or that he talked so well, ---or that he was so sorry for his old ways, and intended to live so differently if he got better, ---or that he craved nothing in this world, ---or that he liked people to read to him, and pray with him." And because they have this to go upon, they seem to have a comfortable hope that he is saved. Christ may never have been named, ---the way of salvation may never have been in the least mentioned. But it matters not: there was a little talk of religion, and so they are content.

Now I have no desire to hurt the feelings of any one who reads these pages, but I must and will speak plainly upon this subject.

Once for all, let me say that, as a general rule, nothing is so unsatisfactory as death-bed evidences. The things that men say, and the feelings they express when sick and frightened, are little to be depended on. Often, too often, they are the result of fear, and do not spring from the ground of the heart. Often, too often, they are things said by rote, ---caught from the lips of ministers and anxious friends, ---but evidently not felt. And nothing can prove all this more clearly than the well-known fact that the great majority of persons who make promises of amendment on a sick bed, if they recover, go back to sin and the world.

When a man has lived a life of thoughtlessness and folly, I want something more than a few fair words, and good wishes, to satisfy me about his soul, when he comes to his death bed. It is not enough for me that he will let me read the Bible to him, and pray by his bedside; that he says, "He has not thought so much as he ought of religion, and he thinks he should be a different man if he got better." All this does not content me; it does not make me feel happy about his state. It is very well, as far as it goes, but it is not conversion. It is very well, in its way, but it is not faith in Christ. Until I see conversion, and faith in Christ, I cannot and dare not feel satisfied. Others may feel satisfied, if they please, and, after their friend's death, say they hope he has gone to Heaven. For my part, I would rather say nothing at all. I would be content with the least measure of repentance and faith in a dying man, even though it were no bigger than a grain of mustard seed; but to be content with

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anything less than repentance and faith, seems to me next door to infidelity.

Reader, what kind of evidence do you mean to leave behind as to the state of your soul? Take example by the penitent thief, and you will do well.

When we have carried you to your narrow bed, let us not have to hunt up stray words, and scraps of religion, in order to make out that you were a true believer. Let us not have to say, in a hesitating way, one to another, "I trust he is happy; he talked so nicely one day, and he seemed so pleased with a chapter in the Bible, on another occasion; and he liked such a person, who is a good man." Let us be able to speak decidedly as to your condition. Let us have some standing proof of your penitence, your faith, and your holiness, that none shall be able, for a moment, to question your state. Depend on it, without this, those you leave behind can feel no solid comfort about your soul. We may use the form of religion at your burial, and express charitable hopes. We may meet you at the church-yard gate, and say, "**Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.**" But this will not alter your condition. If you die without conversion to God, without repentance, and without faith, your funeral will only be the funeral of a lost soul.

IV. You are meant, in the next place, to learn from these verses that *believers in Christ, when they die, are with the Lord.*

This you may gather from our Lord's words to the penitent thief, "**This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**" And you have an expression very like it in the Epistle to the Philippians, where Paul says he has a desire to "**depart, and to be with Christ**" (Phil. 1:23).

I shall say but little on this subject. I would simply lay it before you for your own private meditations. To my own mind it is very full of comfort and peace.

Believers, after death, are "**with Christ.**" That answers many a difficult question, which otherwise might puzzle man's busy, restless mind. The abode of dead saints, their joys, their feelings, their happiness, all seem met by this simple expression---They are with Christ.

I cannot enter into full explanations about the state of departed believers. It is a high and deep subject, such as man's mind can neither grasp nor fathom. Yet I know they enjoy a blessed rest---a rest from labor, a rest from sorrow, a rest from pain, and a rest from sin. But it does not follow because I cannot explain these things, that I am not persuaded they are far happier than they ever were on earth. I see their happiness in this very passage---"**They are with Christ;**" and when I see that, I see enough.

If the sheep are with the Shepherd---if the members are with the Head---if the

children of Christ's family are with Him Who loved them, and carried them all the days of their pilgrimage on earth, all must be well---all must be right.

I cannot describe what kind of place paradise is, but I ask no brighter view of it than this; that Christ is there. All other things in the picture which imagination draws of paradise are nothing in comparison of this. How He is there, and in what way He is there, I know not. Let me only see Christ in paradise when my eyes close in death, and that suffices me. Well does the psalmist say, "**In thy presence is fullness of joy.**" It was a true saying of a dying girl, when her mother tried to comfort her by describing what paradise would be---"There," she said to the child, "there you will have no pains, and no sickness; there you will see your brothers and sisters who have gone before you, and will be always happy." "Ah! Mother," was the reply, "but there is one thing better than all, and that is, *Christ will be there.*"

Reader, it may be you do not think much about your soul. It may be you know little of Christ as your Saviour, and have never tasted by experience that He is precious. And yet perhaps you hope to go to paradise when you die. Surely this passage is one that should make you think. Paradise is a place where Christ is. Then can it be a place that you would enjoy?

Reader, it may be you are a believer, and yet tremble at the thought of the grave. It seems cold and dreary. You feel as if all before you was dark, and gloomy, and comfortless. Fear not; but be encouraged by this text. You are going to paradise, and Christ will be there.

V. The last thing you are meant to learn from these verses is this: *the eternal portion of every man's soul is close to him.*

"**To day,**" says our Lord to the penitent thief, "**to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**" He names no distant period---He does not talk of his entering into a state of happiness as a thing "far away." He speaks of to-day---this very day in which thou art hanging on the cross.

Reader, how near that seems! How awfully near that word brings our everlasting dwelling-place! Happiness or misery, sorrow or joy, the presence of Christ or the company of devils---all are close to us. "**There is but a step,**" says David, "**between me and death**" (I Sam. 20:3). There is but a step, we may say, between ourselves and either paradise or hell.

We, none of us, realize this as we ought to do. It is high time to shake off the dreamy state of mind in which we live on this matter. We are apt to talk and think, even about believers, as if death was a long journey---as if the dying saint had embarked on a long

voyage. It is all wrong, very wrong. Their harbor and their home is close by, and they have entered it.

Some of us know, by bitter experience, what a long and weary time it is between the death of those we love, and the hour when we bury them out of sight. Such weeks are the slowest, saddest, heaviest weeks in all our lives. But, blessed be God, the souls of departed saints are free from the very moment their last breath is drawn. While we are weeping, and the coffin preparing, and the mourning being provided, and the last painful arrangement being made, the spirits of our beloved ones are enjoying the presence of Christ. They are freed forever from the burden of the flesh. They are where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Reader, the day that believers die they are in paradise. Their battle is fought---their strife is over. They have passed through that gloomy valley we must one day tread; they have gone over that dark river we must one day cross. They have drank that last bitter cup which sin has mingled for man. They have reached that place where sorrow and sighing are no more. Surely we should not wish them back again. We should not weep for them, but for ourselves.

We are warring still, but they are at peace. We are laboring, but they are at rest. We are watching, but they are sleeping. We are wearing our spiritual armor, but they have forever put it off. We are still at sea, but they are safe in harbor. We have tears, but they have joy. We are strangers and pilgrims, but as for them they are at home. Surely, better are the dead in Christ than the living. Surely, the very hour the poor saint dies, he is at once higher and happier than the highest upon earth.

I fear there is a vast amount of delusion on this point. I fear that many, who are not Roman Catholics, and profess not to believe purgatory, have, notwithstanding, some strange ideas in their minds about the immediate consequences of death. I fear that many have a sort of vague notion that there is some interval or space of time between death and their eternal state. They fancy they shall go through a kind of purifying change, and that though they die unfit for Heaven, they shall yet be found meet for it after all.

But it will not stand. There is no change after death. There is no conversion in the grave. There is no new heart given after the last breath is drawn. The very day we go we launch forever. The day we go from this world, we begin an eternal condition. From that day there is no spiritual alteration, no spiritual change. As we die, so we shall remain after death. As the tree falls so it must lie.

Reader, if you are an unconverted man, this ought to make you think. Do you know you are close to hell? This very day you might die; and if you died out of Christ, you would open your eyes in hell, and in torment.

Reader, if you are a true Christian, you are far nearer Heaven than you think. This very day if the Lord should take you, you would find yourself in paradise. The good land of promise is near to you. The eyes that you closed in weakness and pain, would open at once on a glorious rest, such as my tongue cannot describe.

And now let me say a few words in conclusion, and I have done.

This book may fall into the hands of some humble-hearted and contrite sinner. Are you that man? Then here is encouragement for you. See what the penitent thief did, and do likewise. See how he prayed; see how he called on the Lord Jesus Christ; see what an answer of peace he obtained. Brother or sister, why should not you also be saved?

This book may fall into the hands of some proud and presumptuous man of the world. Are you that man? Then take warning. See how the impenitent thief died as he had lived, and beware lest you come to a like end. O! erring brother or sister, be not too confident, lest you die in your sins. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Turn you, turn, why will you die?

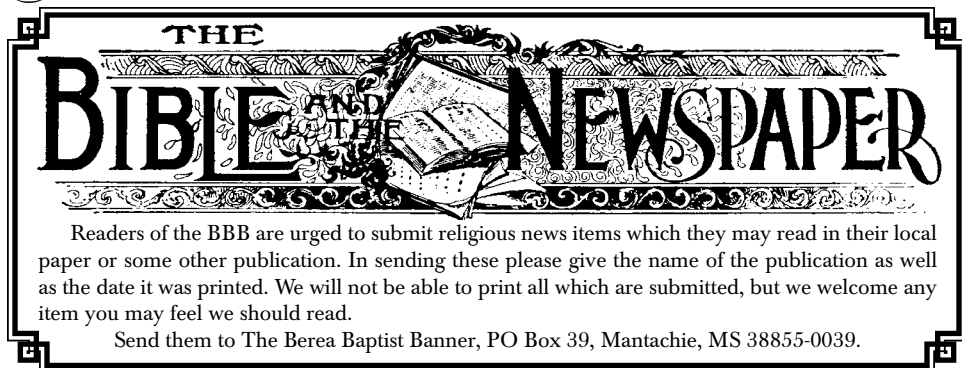
This book may fall into the hands of some professing believer in Christ. Are you such a one? Then take the penitent thief's religion as a measure by which to prove your own. See that you know something of true repentance and saving faith, of real humility and fervent charity. Brother or sister, do not be satisfied with the world's standard of Christianity. Be of one mind with the penitent thief, and you will be wise.

This book may fall into the hands of some one who is mourning over departed believers. Are you such a one? Then take comfort from this Scripture. See how your beloved ones are in the best of hands. They cannot be better off. They never were so well in their lives as they are now. They are with Jesus, Whom their souls loved on earth. O! cease from your selfish mourning. Rejoice rather that they are freed from trouble, and have entered into rest.

And this book may fall into the hands of some aged servant of Christ. Are you such a one? Then see from these verses how near you are to home. A few more days of labor and sorrow, and the King of kings shall send for you; and in a moment your warfare shall be at end, and all shall be peace.

(Home Truths, 1855).





ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AIDED BY STATE OF WISCONSIN

Through the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles, the state of Wisconsin has been aiding illegal immigrants to stay in this country and flaunt our country's immigration laws.

Part of an anonymous letter from an employee of the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) as read by Wisconsin State Representative Mark Gundrum to a committee of the Wisconsin legislature during a hearing on Assembly Bill 69/Senate Bill 334 in 2005 is as follows:

If Osama Bin Laden came to a Wisconsin DMV customer service center, affirmed he was an illegal alien, presented two forms of identification and one proof of residency *in his own name*, he would be issued a Wisconsin ID card. Unless he caused a disturbance or displayed a document that was clearly fraudulent, the police would not be notified.... Once he had his Wisconsin document, Osama would then qualify to get taxpayer benefits, vote in the next election, and do untold harm to our society.

Lee Steines, who worked for the Wisconsin DMV until February 2006, assured The New American that the anonymously written letter gives an accurate picture of daily procedure at Wisconsin DMV offices. If Osama bin Laden requested a Wisconsin driver's license, there is absolutely nothing in DMV policies or procedures that directs an employee to call the police. In fact, there are memos that state that employees are supposed to look the other way — that known criminals and manifest criminal acts are for "law enforcement" to deal with and are none of the DMV's business.

In Wisconsin, neither American citizenship nor legal residency in the country is required to get a drivers license or an official state ID. Proof of identity and state residency are required — but these are really "proof" of nothing. A foreign birth certificate, which a DMV employee may or may not be able to read or check for authenticity may be used to show a person's name and date and place of birth, or a signed credit card may be used as proof of identity. And proof of residency may be verified using a paycheck stub, a state welfare card, or a utility bill. Because Wisconsin has lax standards, it has become a magnet for illegal immigrants. Using Wisconsin documents, ordinary illegal immigrants or international terrorists are able to begin to create identities in this country that cannot be distinguished from native American. (New American, Feb. 19,

2007).

LIES SEND BORDER PATROL AGENTS TO PRISON

NA Department of Homeland Security official admits his agency deceived Congress; Congressman says DHS "lied" about Border Patrol agents.

Former Border Patrol agents Jose Compean and Ignacio Ramos and their families and supporters had hoped for a presidential pardon. They had hoped that these two law enforcement officers with distinguished records and young families would not be sent to prison on the word of a veteran drug smuggler, Osbaldo Aldrete-Davila, who stood to gain \$5 million for giving false testimony against them. They had hoped that President Bush would issue a pardon for the two men to rectify one of the most monumental travesties of justice in recent times. That didn't happen.

During his Christmas pardon spree the president did give pardons to 18 felons, including five drug dealers. But he turned a deaf ear to the pleas of dozens of members of Congress and hundreds of thousands of American citizens who urged him to pardon the Border Patrol agents.

That is just the beginning. The report is filled with many other admissions against interest that will be detailed in a forthcoming analysis. Meanwhile, many other documents that the prosecution had hoped to keep sealed have been leaking out, and they are painting a very ugly picture of criminal activity on the part of federal authorities to railroad agents Compean and Ramos. It is this blatant and increasingly transparent injustice that is stirring so many Americans to demand a full and immediate pardon for them. (New American, Feb. 12, 2007).

SECURING A PARDON FOR SECURE BORDERS

"Everybody realizes that President Bush has some kind of commitment to an open-border policy with Mexico," exclaimed Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R.-Calif.) at a press conference held at the steps of the Old Orange County Courthouse in Santa Ana, California, on December 21, 2006.

Congressman Rohrabacher was joined by Border Patrol agent Jose Compean and his family to call upon the president to grant a presidential pardon to two U.S. Border Patrol agents who are being treated as criminals by the U.S. Justice department for simply performing their duties to secure our country.

Border Patrol agents Jose Compean and Ignacio Ramos were sentenced in October 2006 to 12 and 11 years respectively for an incident that occurred along the El Paso, Texas, border in February 2005. That incident involved both agents in a non-fatal shooting of an admitted drug smuggler, Osbaldo Aldrete-Davila, as he tried to smuggle 743 pounds of marijuana in his van into the United States.

Aldrete-Davila eventually escaped back into Mexico, but that was only the beginning of an ordeal that would continue to haunt agents Compean and Ramos. To the shock of many, the drug smuggler was given free medical treatment for his wounds and immunity by the U.S. Attorney's Office in exchange for his testimony against both agents. Furthermore, Aldrete-Davila, who lives in Mexico and even failed to show up to testify against the agents, is suing the U.S. Border Patrol for \$5 million for violating his civil rights.

Both Jose Compean and Ignacio Ramos have been ordered to begin serving their sentences on January 17. During Christmas, President Bush pardoned 16 criminals including five drug dealers. In light of this, 51 congressmen have signed a letter urging the White house to grant a pardon to the two Border Patrol agents.

Perhaps Congressman Rohrabacher put this whole distorted scenario into perspective when he stated, "They [the Bush administration] got their priorities totally backwards. We should be backing up our defenders, finding reasons to help our defenders, and finding reasons to put the bad guy away. Our President is treating the bad guys like good guys and the good guys like bad guys."

For more information about the Compean/Ramos case, see "Betrayed in the Line of Duty" in our September 18, 2006 issue. (The New American, Jan. 22, 2007).

BUSH ADMINISTRATION APPROVES OF UN STATUS FOR HOMOSEXUAL GROUPS

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has granted official status to three European homosexual organizations. After initially objecting to awarding this coveted status to such groups, the Bush administration's representative went along and voted for it.

Two of the groups gaining UN approval were the Danish National Association for Gays and Lesbians and the Gay Federation in Germany. Also winning approval was the International Lesbian and Gay Federation (ILGA), a group whose alliance with the child-sex group NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) earned rejection in past years. ILGA's claims that it has broken with NAMBLA, the leading pedophilia promoter in the United States, but it refuses to condemn NAMBLA.

The vote to accept the three organizations by the UN's ECOSOC was 23 in favor, 16 against, and 10 abstentions, with the United States voting approval. (The New American,

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Jan. 22, 2007).

CONGRESS MOVES TO ERODE RIGHTS TO SPEECH, PRESS, PETITION

Using the Jack Abramoff bribery scandal and other recent campaign contribution/ bribery scandals as a pretext, a bipartisan group of U.S. senators, led by Majority Leader Harry Reid (D.-Nev.) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R.-Ky.), is trying to limit grass-roots activism by labeling it as "lobbying." The American Family Association, the Traditional Values Coalition, Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family, and other pro-family pro-life groups are leading a nationwide effort to stop this assault on the First Amendment, which was put on the fast track for Senate action in January.

"The Traditional Values Coalition is deeply concerned about the grass-roots lobbying requirements in Section 220 of S.1, the Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act," said TVC Chairman Louis P. Sheldon on January 12. "This legislation will place onerous reporting requirements on individuals and organizations that lobby our national leaders on issues of importance to them. And, it will impose draconian fines---including potential criminal penalties---for failure to obey these new lobby restrictions." Sheldon points out that Section 220 will target any organization with more than 500 supporters or if a communication reaches 500 or more individuals.

The reporting requirements and penalties in Section 220 "will place incredible financial and time burdens on grassroots groups as well as potential fines---thus making it less likely that these groups risk communicating with their members on important issues," said Sheldon. "This cleverly-written section doesn't directly assault free speech, but it creates a climate of fear that chills free speech. Will a small grassroots group speak out if it fears being fined for failing to file the correct reports to Congress? This legislation is a subversion of our First Amendment rights." (The New American, Feb. 5, 2007).

MAINE LEGISLATURE REJECTS REAL ID ACT

The Maine legislature overwhelmingly approved a resolution to oppose the federal requirements in the 2005 Real ID Act that would require states to comply with standardizing driver's licenses. The

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resolution (which was passed by a vote of 34-0 in the Senate and 137-4 in the House) rejects state compliance with the digital standards required in the act and asks that the U.S. Congress repeal the law. Georgia, Massachusetts, Montana, and Washington have similar bills pending in their state legislatures.

CNET News.com reported that this is a major political setback for the Department of Homeland Security, which has argued that a nationalized ID would help make the country safer from terrorists. Critics of the act claim that the ID requirements are too intrusive as they would include RFID technology that could electronically store personal information such as fingerprints, retinal scans, and Social Security numbers.

Maine took a strong stand against the usurpation of state power by passing this resolution. However, unless the Real ID Act is repealed in Congress, residents of Maine may be unable to travel freely on various modes of transportation (for example, public transportation, airplanes, etc.) if they fail to provide a federally required "national ID" card. (The New American, Feb. 19, 2007).

ANTI-NORTH AMERICAN UNION RESOLUTION INTRODUCED IN HOUSE

On January 22, Representative Virgil Goode (R.-Va.) introduced House Concurrent Resolution 40. If passed, the resolution would express "the sense of Congress that the United States should not engage in the construction of a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Superhighway System or enter into a North American Union with Mexico and Canada."

Members of the U.S. Congress are not the only lawmakers who are opposing this stealth merger of three sovereign nations. Anti-NAU resolutions have been introduced at the state level in South Carolina, Utah, and Virginia--with more states expected to join the fight. (The New American, Feb. 19, 2007).

MEXICAN GUNMEN FORCE NATIONAL GUARD TO RETREAT ON BORDER

In an incident that could have turned deadly, a four-man National Guard unit serving near the Arizona-Mexico border was forced on January 3 to retreat before a larger group of armed Mexicans that was attempting to flank and surround them. The Bush administration, in keeping with its past performance on armed incursions from Mexico, has attempted to play down the seriousness of the occurrence. Initially, it said that the intruders had only come within 100 yards of the Guard unit and that the Guard had *not* retreated. However, a summary military report, released by Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano on January 19, says that at least one of the gunmen, armed with an automatic weapon, came within 35

feet of the U.S. soldiers.

"As the group approached, and while under observation of the Guardsmen, the group split into two groups to surround the site," the report states. According to the Associated Press, the report states that the Guardsmen "then began to withdraw to avoid a confrontation. As the troops were loading their gear into their vehicle, one of the armed men approached within 10 meters." After loading the vehicle and driving away, as per their orders, the Guardsmen called Border Patrol agents, who tracked the intruders back to the border but were unable to find them.

Foxnews.com cited unnamed "Border Patrol sources in Tucson" who described the event as "a tense, armed confrontation, with both sides lifting their assault rifles to shoulder height." The Fox sources say "12 men assaulted the Guard position, dressed in black tactical vests and khaki military style fatigues. . . Surrounded, outmanned and outgunned, the four Guardsmen made a 'tactical retreat' to their Humvee." (The New American, Feb. 19, 2007).

CALIFORNIA'S "FREE" HEALTHCARE TO INCLUDE ILLEGAL ALIENS

On January 10, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger unveiled a \$143.5 billion budget that he proclaimed would wipe out the Golden State's chronic budget deficit and put the state on the road to solid economic health. However, the state's nonpartisan legislative analysts, Walt Street bond raters, and Republican state legislators charge that the "Governor" has cooked the books, using wildly optimistic revenue assumptions and hiding the true costs of many programs. Additionally, the Schwarzenegger plan calls for borrowing \$43 billion. However, the proposal that is causing greatest concerns among conservatives is Schwarzenegger's revolutionary proposal to mandate universal medical insurance for all Californians, including illegal aliens.

"Everyone in California must have health insurance," Schwarzenegger said in his televised address. "If you can't afford it, the state will help you buy it, but you must be insured." He said his state program was necessary to accommodate an estimated 6.5 million uninsured Californians, many of whom are illegal aliens. The program, which some analysts estimate would cost \$10 billion per year, would be paid for by a combination of "contributions" from individuals, employers, doctors, hospitals, and insurers.

"It is disappointing that just 72 hours into his [second] term he's shattered the central campaign pledge upon which he won reelection--not to raise taxes," said conservative Republican State Sen. Tom McClintock. (The New American, Feb. 5, 2007).

CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY INTO 1995 OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING FIZZLES

After nearly two years of "investigation," a congressional inquiry into the 1995 bombing

of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City has delivered a frustratingly inconclusive report that raises more questions than it answers.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R.-Calif.), who chaired the inquest by the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, had repeatedly indicated that he would aggressively investigate evidence that convicted bombers Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols had been assisted by others. Specifically, he had targeted evidence pointing toward foreign involvement of Middle easterners, a German national by the name of Andreas Strassmeir, and a group of Aryan bank robbers associated with a rural Oklahoma white separatist compound known as Elohim City.

The subcommittee report, entitled *The Oklahoma City Bombing: Was There A Foreign Connection?*, justifiably criticizes the federal investigation for failing to follow important leads and ignoring obvious suspects and evidence. Particularly, it criticizes the Department of Justice and the FBI for "calling off any further investigation into John Doe Two," and failure to "thoroughly investigate the potential involvement of Andreas Strassmeir and Hussain alO Hussain, et al., despite evidence showing they may have played a role."

The report is critical not only of *past* obstruction during the Clinton administration, but ongoing stonewalling during the current Bush administration. Without naming names, the report is critical of federal officials who were "less than responsive" and says the subcommittee "is dismayed that there remains a lack of willingness to examine legitimate issues."

Survivors and family members of the 168 victims who died in the blast no doubt also are dismayed at the half-hearted (at best) investigative efforts by the Rohrabacher subcommittee, as well as its decision to release the report during the worst possible news cycle. After spending two years digging into important ignored and covered-up evidence concerning one of the most important terror attacks ever on America, the subcommittee issued its news release announcing its report the day before Christmas, and then issued the actual report the day after Christmas.

The Rohrabacher report concludes by saying: "We have found no conclusive evidence of a foreign connection, but there remain questions that need to be answered before this final chapter can justifiably be closed." Indeed, the subcommittee has raised even *more* questions with its own conduct, its reluctance to take on the former and current executive branch officials who have stymied the OKC bombing case from the beginning, and its failure to follow through on much of the important evidence that was provided to it. (The New American, Jan. 22, 2007).

VENEZUELAN VOTING MACHINE FIRM LEAVES U.S. MARKET

In the aftermath of last fall's disclosures that electronic voting machines can easily be adjusted to rig an election, a new concern

has been raised about their use. Smartmatic, a Venezuelan company that makes electronic voting machines widely used in American elections, is facing an investigation into its ties to the Marxist regime of Hugo Chavez. However, the company will divest itself of Sequoia Voting Systems, the company's U.S. subsidiary, ending the investigation.

The investigation by the Treasury Department's Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) came after several investigative reports, chiefly by the *Miami Herald*, revealed the company's ties to the Chavez regime. According to the *Herald* investigation, it was through a \$200,000 investment in a voting software business run by Smartmatic's president that the Venezuelan voting machine firm was able to get a foothold in the market place. Though the sale of Sequoia Voting Systems will mean the end for the CFIUS investigation, Smartmatic is not yet in the clear. According to the *Miami Herald*, the company has been in contact with the Justice Department to deny that it "paid a bribe to secure a \$91 million contract to supply electronic voting machines in Venezuela." Moreover, the *Herald* reports, agents from the IRS and the FBI "are investigating allegations involving tax evasion, an excessive commission to a lobbyist in Caracas and alleged death threats by Smartmatic President Antonio Mugica." (The New American, Jan. 22, 2007).

FIRST 100 HOURS OF THE HOUSE DISAPPOINTING TO FAMILY ADVOCATES

(EP News)--Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., promised to pass legislation on eight issues in her first 100 hours in leadership, but along the way, a social security bill was dropped.

Pelosi was in a jubilant mood after that first week.

"I salute you, our great majority leader (and) the leadership of this party for the great work that has been done in the first 100 hours of this Congress," she said to her colleagues.

The House voted to expand federal funding for stem-cell research that kills living embryos, raised the minimum wage, increasing the burden on small business, and punished oil companies for large profits.

All in all, it's just about what Tom McClusky, Family Research Council's vice president for government affairs, expected.

"They said they were trying to find popular issues, issues that are of concern to people," he said. "Yet, they left out the families and what to do for the families."

McClusky noted that legislation to protect religious speech, to make tax cuts permanent or to keep young girls from being taken across state lines for an abortion are all issues with broad public support.

"If the Democrats are truly trying to govern from the middle," he said, "they should take these popular issues and pass them."

Don Wildmon, chairman of the American Family Association, said most family

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Did Christ take away the Adamic sin for all mankind without exception? - Kentucky

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



No, Christ did not take away the Adamic sin for all mankind without exception. Christ in no way died for all of mankind's sin in general. He died as a substitute for all that the Father gave Him in the covenant of grace before the world began. Not one more or one less. Every one that Christ gave His life for on the cross will enjoy the glories of eternal life. In His high priestly prayer Jesus said: **"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"** (John 17:2 cf. John 6:37-40).

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross was a complete success. He died for the elect. He put away their sins in particular. Christ did not merely cover sin like the Old Testament sacrificial economy did. Nor did Jesus merely make salvation possible if His sacrifice is mixed with the mythical power of man's free will. No, He died to put away the sins of His people once and for all. Hebrews 9:26 & 28 declare: **"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself... So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..."**

Christ put away sin as well as its penalty when He acted as Surety for His people. As a result, all the elect who are set apart by His covenant blood will in time enjoy complete perfection according to Hebrews 10:14 which states: **"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."** This state of perfection for the elect is according to the will of God and will be a fulfillment of intercessory prayer of Christ as uttered in John 17:23-24: **"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."**

The theory that Christ died for the Adamic sin of all mankind is untenable and unscriptural. If Christ died for the Adamic sin of all mankind there would be no infant mortality rate. The wages

of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This theory makes the sacrifice of Christ merely provisional rather than particular. It is a compromise with the General Atonement theorists and those who espouse Arminian theology.

Furthermore, the provisional Adamic sin theory implies that guilt may be imputed apart from corruption of nature. This idea is soundly refuted in T.P. Simmons book, A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine:

"This theory supposes that the effect of Adam's sin upon the race is twofold: (1) imputation of guilt for the overt act of Adam in partaking of the forbidden fruit, and (2) corruption of nature. And it implies that guilt may be imputed apart from corruption. This we flatly deny. We become guilty through Adam's natural headship, from which we inherit a corrupt nature. We are under the penalty of sin because we sinned in Adam, our nature being one with him (Rom 5:12). If guilt may be imputed without corruption, then the law demanded the death of Christ, because He had a human nature; but the idea that He died in any sense for Himself is utterly foreign to Scripture. He is everywhere described and presented as having no guilt of His own, but as bearing the guilt of others. If to Him was imputed guilt for the Adamic sin, as necessarily was the case if this guilt is imputed to every descendant of Adam apart from corruption, then He knew sin, the Scripture says that He knew no sin." (p. 252, 1996; 7th edition).

TOM ROSS

Mike DeWitt Sr.
4123 Forsythia
Springfield, OR 97478

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477



"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). God's Word is very definitive about this particular subject before us. Pay attention to God's Word when He says in His book of promises that He shall save **"His people"** from their sins.

In this time of rampant false doctrine concerning salvation there are those who hold to one of three viewpoints. 1. Being none at all, or simply put they say there is no God. God's Word tells us if this doctrine is true. To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. **"The fool hath said in**

his heart, There is no God" (Ps. 53:1).

"They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1). 2. That all the sins of all people of all ages have their sins forgiven and paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God's Word has this to say about it. **"He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"** (I John 5:12). 3. That all the sins of some men were paid for thru the sacrifice of the Son of God. God's Word declares this, **"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father"** (John 6:65).

What the Bible says about this subject is very plain. We have a multitude of verses that explain the subject at hand. God in His infinite wisdom and power in eternity past was pleased to secure the names of God's elect. **"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"** (Titus 1:2). What is neglected by many is the doctrine of God's determinate council. The promise of eternal life was promised before the world began to those who were given to the Lamb of God.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). This verse has so much to say to those who hold to anything opposite of God's Word concerning the doctrine of election, atonement, predestination, preservation, and lack of ability of a sinner.

Therefore, if God provided the atonement for the sins of all mankind then there would be no need for the final destination of the unrighteous in the lake of fire. Christ Himself said that He prayed not for the world, if Christ loved all of mankind without exception and took away all the sins of mankind, does He not love them enough to pray for them?

Scripture concludes that **"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"** (John 3:18). Oh, some have said that the sin of unbelief is what sends persons to eternal torment. If Christ died for all the sins of all mankind, then, would not the sin of unbelief be included?

A promise given by God to **"His people"** is a promise as steadfast and sure as the essence of God being unchangeable. **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"** (Rev 20:15). There is a book with names that are written from

the foundation of the earth, **"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"** (Rev 17:8). This is the hope of eternal life given by God thru Jesus Christ before the earth ever was. **"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"** (Rev 21:27).

I conclude this little article with one more verse from God's Word **"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you"** (John 10:26).

MIKE DEWITT

Raymond F. Bennett
Berach Baptist Mission
271 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of
Berea
Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



Romans 5:18: **"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."**

Titus 2:11: **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."** (Italics mine.)

I suppose that this question has been debated among theologians and the "rank and file" for 2,000 years. In the space allowed in a forum such as this we can never satisfactorily answer it. In the verses quoted above the italicized word would seem to imply a "yes" answer at first glance.

The italicized words in the verses quoted below would seem to indicate a "no" answer and seem to make salvation conditional.

I Corinthians 1:21: **"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."**

I Timothy 4:10: **"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."**

Either would be wrong!

In John 10 we see Jesus calling out His own sheep. **"And when he putteth forth his own sheep..."** (v. 4). In the first 6 verses of John 10 we observe the presence of sheep that don't know the shepherd's voice and won't follow the shepherd. Earlier, in chapter 6, Christ makes it clear that salvation is available and applicable to **"all that the Father**

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The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. How many resurrections are in the Bible? Please give Scripture proof for each. – West Virginia

Raymond F. Bennett
Berach Baptist Mission
271 Gray Road
Ithaca, NY 14850-8761

Missionary of
Berea
Baptist Church
PO Box 39
Mantachie, MS 38855



There are over 40 references to the resurrection in the New Testament. Those who like to debate eschatology have a ball arguing about how many resurrections and when they will occur. But in the final analysis the Bible only speaks of two resurrections: **“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”** (John 5:29). **“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust”** (Acts 24:15). Actually these are the only references that refer to both of them in the same verse. The reality of resurrection is assured by these verses: Luke 14:14; John 11:24; and the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, but these references seem to deal exclusively with the resurrection of the just.

The question arises in the evidence that the resurrection of the just seems to be in several phases.

1. Christ, the first fruits and the assurance of the resurrection of the just. I Corinthians 15:20 and 23: **“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept...But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”** (Italics mine.)

2. Evidently there was some resurrection immediately after Christ’s resurrection, sort of a further proof of, the *fact* of resurrection, the deity of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. Matthew 27:53: **“And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”**

3. A resurrection at Christ’s return. I Thessalonians 4:16: **“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first”** (Italics mine.)

Even within our camp of Sovereign Grace, Landmark Baptists there is debate about this resurrection being referred to as the “pre-tribulation rapture” but there is ample scriptural evidence of both the Bride of Christ and the guests at the Wedding being in Glory with Christ

before His return at that final battle. **“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”** (Rev. 19:7-9).

4. Then there is the distribution of thrones and authority given to the saints before the prescribed **“thousand years.”** Revelation 20:4-5: **“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”** (Italics mine.) The italicized portion can only refer to saints who were here on earth while the Bride was at the previously mentioned wedding supper.

Between Revelation 20:5 and verse 12 there are a thousand years. Please notice that this **“thousand years”** is a prescribed time that must be finished and that the thousand years have a definite starting and ending time, just like the 24-hour days of Genesis 1.

At the end of the prescribed thousand years (v. 12) the Great White Throne of Judgment takes place. Revelation 20:12-14: **“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”**

(There is an important word of warning here in verse 15! **“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”**)

Scripture does not delineate a specific resurrection of the just along with this second resurrection. It could be argued that the just that came out of the thousand years remained on earth, but this is unlikely because Revelation 21:1 speaks of a *new earth*, the old earth

having **“passed away”**, so the *just* from the thousand years must have been taken up. That would become the 5th phase of the first resurrection.

RAY BENNETT

Mike DeWitt Sr.
4123 Forsythia
Springfield, OR 97478

Pastor
Parkway Landmark
Baptist Church
PO Box 950
Springfield, OR 97477



I must say that as I was looking at the question, I was trying to count up all the different resurrections in the Bible. As I meditated upon this question a verse of Scripture was called to remembrance **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years”** (Rev. 20:6). This first resurrection includes all of the elect prior to the thousand year reign of Christ, living and dead, that have been resurrected to eternal life.

The interval of one thousand years is accomplished between verses 6, 7 of Revelation 20. Thus we find the words **“the second death”** in verse 6 as a comparison resurrection of the just to eternal life and the second resurrection unto eternal torment.

Verses 11-15 of Revelation 20 describe the second resurrection being made up of the unrighteous and their final judgment.

Thus as brief as this is, the Bible is very plain and simply states without any mysterious words or phraseology that there are two and only two resurrections in God’s Word.

MIKE DEWITT

Tom Ross
6339 County Rd. 15
South Point, OH 45680

Pastor
Mt. Pleasant
Baptist Church
6939 County Rd. 15
Chesapeake, OH 45619



The Scriptures speak of two resurrections as expressed in Acts 24:15 which states: **“And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”** Thus, there will be a resurrection of the just and a separate resurrection of the

unjust.

The resurrection of the just is an out-resurrection from the dead (ek nekron in the Greek) distinguishing the resurrection of the saved from the resurrection of the unsaved dead. The resurrection of the just is elsewhere referred to as **“a better resurrection”** (Heb. 11:35), **“the resurrection of life”** (John 5:29), and it is also designated as **“the first resurrection”** (Rev. 20:6). This is the resurrection that Paul referred to in Philippians 3:10-11 which states: **“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”** (ek nekron). Pentecost observed: **“These phrases suggest a separation; a resurrection of a portion of those who are dead, which resurrection leaves some dead unchanged while these resurrected undergo a complete transformation.”**

The resurrection of the just is also called the first resurrection and includes a definite program and order as expressed in I Corinthians 15:20-23: **“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”** The resurrection of Christ Himself out from among the dead is called the first fruits of the resurrection meaning that His bodily resurrection serves as the promise of a harvest yet to come. Included among those who will be raised are the saints whose bodies die prior to the Rapture. They will be raised at the first phase of the Second Coming just prior to the Tribulation Period and the revelation of the antichrist (I Thess. 1:10; 4:14-18 cf. II Thess. 2:1-8). At the second phase of the Second Coming known as the Second Advent which occurs at the end of the Tribulation Period, the saints who were martyred during the Tribulation will be raised to reign with Christ for a thousand years. Revelation 20:4-6 states: **“And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God**

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Forum #1

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giveth me" (v. 37).

We need, then, to apply some simple logic to this question. We need to ask ourselves, "What is the root cause for mankind being lost?" Romans 5:12 answers that question! **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** Man does not become a sinner when he first commits an overt sin. Man is a sinner, man is lost, because he inherited a sin nature from Adam.

So, for Christ to save anyone He must take away the Adamic sin. But obviously He doesn't take away the Adamic sin of all men or all men would be saved. He takes away the Adamic sin of His own elect! (Cf. Matthew 24:24 "...if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.")

There is a legal term called "double jeopardy." It means that a person cannot be punished for the same crime twice. It logically follows, then, that if anyone went to hell, for whom Christ had paid the penalty, it would be "spiritual double jeopardy."

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Forum #2

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and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The resurrection of the unjust also referred to as **"the resurrection of damnation"** (John 5:29), is the second resurrection and has only to do with the unsaved dead of all ages. This resurrection will occur after the Millennial reign of Christ, after the final rebellion of Satan and his minions are defeated. This resurrection will be for the purpose of assembling all the unsaved dead to face the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne of Judgment to determine their place in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

TOM ROSS



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advocates have been disappointed by House Democrat leadership's first week.

"They need to cooperate a little bit more, but they're not," he said. "Their ideology is fixed, and they're going to push it."

MISSISSIPPI BILL WOULD OFFER LOOK AT ULTRASOUND PICTURES

(EP News)—A Mississippi lawmaker has proposed legislation that would give abortion-minded women the option of first seeing an

image of their preborn baby, LifeNews.com reported.

Republican Sen. Alan Nunnelee, chairman of the Public Health Committee, is the bill's sponsor.

"Abortionists make a lot of money," he said. "They want to convey the idea that this procedure involves a mass of tissue, when in reality it involves a child."

Ann Rose, vice president of the National Women's Health Organization, said the bill is an attempt to harass clinics and women who want abortions.

"I don't think it will see the light of day," she said. Nunnelee agrees that it is unlikely the bill will become law this session, but he hopes it will slowly gain traction, and that other states might follow his lead and that eventually standardized language that will pass not only in Mississippi, but elsewhere, is established.

Camilla Lewis, spokeswoman for Pro-Life Mississippi, said women should be given the opportunity to see what is growing inside them.

"If a woman sees and hears movement, those things are going to appeal to her senses and maternal nature," she said. "No telling how many abortions that could avert."

ILLINOIS A STEP CLOSER TO ENFORCING PARENTAL-NOTIFICATION LAW

(EP News)—Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan has asked a federal court to clear the way for enforcement of a parental-notification law that has languished in legal battles for more than 10 years, The Associated Press reported.

The Parental Notice of Abortion Act - passed in 1995 -- made it illegal for a girl under 18 to get an abortion without notifying a parent at least 48 hours in advance.

The law was immediately challenged by pro-abortion groups. A federal court ruled it unenforceable until the rules for a waiver were established. But the state Supreme Court failed to take action on setting those rules for a decade.

Finally, in 2005, it unanimously approved new rules similar to those that have passed legal muster in other states -- clearing the way for Madigan to move to overturn the federal court order that prohibits enforcement.

"As the chief legal officer of the State of Illinois, it is my duty to uphold the constitution and to defend the laws of this state, if they are constitutional," Madigan said. "At this point, 44 states have parental-involvement laws, and courts have upheld many parental-notice laws that are similar to the Act."

Lorie Chaiten, director of the Reproductive Rights Project for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois, said the rules issued by the Supreme Court of Illinois make it too difficult for a teenager in an abusive situation to get an abortion.

"When a young woman does not consult her parents, it is for good reason," she said.

Thomas Brejcha, president of the Thomas More Society, an advocacy group that asked

the Supreme Court to issue the rules, was pleased to see Madigan proceed.

"It certainly took a while," he said, "but overdue though it may be, it's a welcome step."

DEMOCRATIC BILLS AIM FOR "PREGNANCY REDUCTION"

(EP News)—Hoping to recast the abortion debate, Democrats in Congress are introducing bills that target ways to discourage abortion -- but life advocates question just how "pro-life" those bills really are and the motivations behind them.

In the House, one such bill is being sponsored by Reps. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, and Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn. The bill could attract support from some pro-lifers, because it has provisions that pro-lifers have supported.

"Our bill would reduce the number of abortions in the country," Ryan told CitizenLink. "It has three basic components -- the first is to try to prevent unintended pregnancies to the extent that we can, by making sure that poor women have access to contraception, birth-control pills and the like."

The second component is to increase the adoption tax credit from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The third is to increase family-planning funding that routinely goes to condom distribution and comprehensive sex education.

"If a woman does get pregnant and doesn't intend to, we as a society need to do everything we can to help her carry the baby to term," Ryan said. "That is something I hope we can all agree upon."

But Dave Christensen, director of congressional affairs for the Family Research Council, said there is significant disagreement about the bill -- even among pro-life Democrats.

"It is not being supported by any of the 100-percent pro-life members of the House," he said.

Christensen said the bill uses code words like "pregnancy-prevention programs" to mask the true impact.

"By that they mean 'condom distribution,'" he said. "But they also go so far as to fund 'emergency contraception' -- or Plan B."

Probably the most egregious feature of the bill, however, is the increase in funding for family planning.

"The problem is that -- because of regulations from under the Clinton administration -- any organization that gets Title X family-planning money has to refer for abortion," Christensen said. "That means crisis-pregnancy centers, pro-life groups and conservative groups cannot get those funds unless they compromise and refer for abortion."

Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood -- the nation's largest abortion provider -- would get a huge boost in federal funding for family-planning services -- from \$283 million a year to \$647 million.

"In a nutshell, they are saying, 'We want to reduce abortion by funding Planned

Parenthood' -- which makes absolutely no sense," Christensen added.

Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, called the Ryan-DeLauro bill "deceptive," but expects it to move through the House.

"This is a bill cooked up by a think tank called Third Way, which is staffed by veteran pro-abortion activists," Johnson said. "The Democratic leadership wants to have it both ways. They want to deliver the goods to the pro-abortion side. And they want to create the perception that they are creating reasonable policies that everybody supports."

Both Christensen and Johnson said there is an alternative Democratic bill, sponsored by Rep. Lincoln Davis, D-Tenn., that has the support of Democrats for Life as well as many 100-percent pro-life congressmen.

BUSH ASKS CONGRESS FOR SCHOOL VOUCHERS

(EP News)—The Bush administration released a plan today calling on Congress to reauthorize and make needed changes to No Child Left Behind, including a school-voucher program that would allow students in failing schools to attend classes elsewhere. A similar voucher program was proposed when the No Child Left Behind law was passed five years ago but was ultimately rejected by Congress. Joel Kaplan, White House deputy chief of staff, said the plan could benefit many students across the nation. "This is for those kids who are trapped in the absolute worst schools," he said, "that just don't seem to be capable -- or willing -- to make the changes necessary to serve those students well." Democratic leadership has already voiced opposition.

UTAH BECOMES FIRST STATE TO APPROVE VOUCHER PROGRAM

(EP News)—The Utah Senate passed a bill Feb. 9 that would allocate up to \$3,000 for every school-aged child that could be used toward private-school tuition. The House also passed the bill, and Gov. John Huntsman is expected to sign it into law.

This makes the Utah legislature the first in the nation to pass a statewide voucher program.

Zack Dawes, state advocate for the Alliance for School Choice, said parents will be able to choose from a variety of options for their kids' education -- including private and religious schools.

"There are children right now who don't have choices, who can't relocate to a better neighborhood, who don't have the financial means to attend a school of their parents' choosing," he said. "This will enable them to do that right away. It applies to every child across the state of Utah."

Republican Rep. Stephen Urquhart, the bill's sponsor, successfully mollified concerns that the public education system would suffer a financial strain if money was diverted to vouchers.

"They did an excellent job of diffusing that myth," Dawes said. "Choice programs all

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across the country have not drained money from public schools, but have increased funding per child, per classroom, per district, per you-name-it -- so the two don't have to be mutually exclusive."

In fact, he said, lawmakers ensured districts wouldn't lose money -- any district that can show a loss will be reimbursed.

Dawes credits the perseverance of strong community advocates for the success.

"The leadership said, 'We're going to continue to communicate, we're going to build, we're going to grow, we're going to help reach out when people disagree with us, we're going to discuss it civilly, and we understand that everyone wants the best for all the children.'"

In the end, lawmakers understood what the program would accomplish, Dawes said.

"It will not hurt public schools," he said. "It will give parents who desperately need it a choice."

While school-voucher advocates anticipate challenges to the program, Dawes said he's optimistic Utah will see educational freedom by next fall.

"One thing we see in common in every state where school-choice programs have been enacted," he said, "is, all of a sudden, parents become more involved, more active, in their child's education -- because they have a direct say in where they attend.

"School districts and people that are involved in the education system will realize, 'Hey, this was not a bad thing, this was actually a good thing for our kids.'"

PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION SAVES LIVES, HERITAGE STUDY ASSERTS

(EP News)--A new Heritage Foundation study shows that in states with restrictions on abortion, the abortion rate has declined significantly since 1990 -- especially among minors. The study was released Feb. 5. Dr. Michael New, assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama and author of the study, examined data from 1985 to 1999. He found states with parental-involvement laws led to a 16-percent decline in the minor abortion rate. Medicaid-funding restrictions resulted in a 23-percent decline. "While a number of factors may have contributed to this decline," he wrote, "the impact of pro-life legislation on the incidence of abortion among minors cannot be overlooked." Pro-life laws dealing with parental involvement, fetal pain and informed consent not only reduce the rate of abortion, New said, they enlighten the public.

TEXAS GOVERNOR MANDATES HPV VACCINATION

(EP News)--Texas Gov. Rick Perry made Texas the first state to require every schoolgirl to be vaccinated for the sexually transmitted Human Papillomavirus (HPV). The HPV vaccine -- marketed as Gardasil -- has the

capability of saving lives around the world. Mandating vaccination for pubescent girls has raised concerns among evangelicals and civil libertarians. However, a Christian physicians group remains cautiously optimistic about the plan. Dr. Beverly Nuckols of New Braunfels, a member of the Christian Medical Association (CMA), believes the program has more positives than negatives. "None of us want our girls or our boys to be sick. We can raise them as well as we want to," she says. "We can keep them in church, keep them at home, and keep them from having sex until they're married, but they may marry someone who didn't have that kind of upbringing."

FURNISHINGS COMPANY PROMOTES HOMOSEXUALITY IN ADS

(EP News)--The American Family Association (AFA) is complaining about a U.S. advertising campaign for IKEA, a home furnishings company, which features a homosexual family theme in its commercial. The commercial includes a same-sex couple and young female child on the floor. The three lean against the couch, resting on each other as a voiceover asks, "Why shouldn't sofas come in flavors, like families?" AFA special projects director Randy Sharp says IKEA routinely promotes the homosexual lifestyle in ads around the world. "IKEA produces dozens of pro-homosexual ads that they air on Swedish TV," he said. Sharp says the AFA has sent a letter to the company, which has corporate offices in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium, explaining to its executives that IKEA's promotion of homosexual couples as the definition of a family is offensive to pro-family U.S. citizens and undermines American values.

HEALTH OF NATION DEPENDS ON SPIRITUAL HEALTH, GALLUP POLL SAYS

(EP News)--According to a Jan. 30 Gallup Poll, almost two-thirds of Americans say the overall health of the nation is "heavily dependent on spiritual health." Another 77 percent say the economy also depends on the country's spirituality. Of those surveyed, 43 percent were Democrats, 41 percent were Republicans and 13 percent were Independents.

STATE OF THE UNION SILENT ON PRO-FAMILY ISSUES

(EP News)--Pro-family leaders say President Bush missed an opportunity to define the final two years of his administration by not speaking in defense of the family Jan. 23 during his annual State of the Union address. Family Research Council President Tony Perkins praised Bush for challenging Congress to protect Americans against Islamo-fascism and for how he dealt with the bulk of issues he touched on in the 50 minute-long address -- health care, energy, education, Iraq, immigration and spending reform. But Perkins added, "The president failed to challenge the new majority to advance core

family and cultural issues -- issues of faith, family and freedom -- that many in the new congressional majority campaigned upon last fall."

UTAH CONSIDERS ABORTION BAN

(EP News)--A Utah House committee approved an abortion ban Jan. 30, with few exceptions, the "Salt Lake Tribune" reported. The bill would outlaw abortion, except for cases of rape and incest or if the mother is at risk of "substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function." Republican Rep. Stephen Sandstrom, the bill's sponsor, said Utah should be leading the charge to protect the preborn. "This is the most important legislation that I could possibly be involved with," he said. "We're talking about preserving the sanctity of human life." Some Democrats, like Rep. David Litvack, are not as committed to protecting the preborn. "It's irresponsible to spend tax dollars in a blatantly unconstitutional effort," he said. "This is silly." Rep. Paul Ray, a Republican from Clearfield, said there are plans to establish a litigation fund for the expected legal battle.

KENTUCKY JUDGE SAYS MEDI-SHARE NOT INSURANCE

(EP News)--A Kentucky judge has ruled that the Christian health organization known as Medi-Share, which brings Christians together to share the cost of their medical bills and support each other with prayer, can continue operating in the state. The Kentucky Department of Insurance had asked a circuit court to ban the nonprofit group's program from the state. The regulatory agency argued that Medi-Share was an insurance program and that it should therefore be subject to the same state laws that govern health insurance companies. However, Franklin County Circuit Judge Thomas Wingate disagreed and ruled that the Christian organization's cost-sharing plan was not an insurance program and did not violate any laws. About 50,000 Christians throughout the United States, along with overseas missionaries, belong to Medi-Share. Since 1993, the organization's members have shared more than \$250 million in medical costs.

MINNESOTA MAN CHARGED WITH MURDER OF PREBORN BABY

(EP News)--A man whom police say beat his 18-year-old pregnant girlfriend has also been charged with the murder of her preborn baby, The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. The police report describes how an elevator security camera captured 20-year-old Dino Scott mugging for the camera, then kicking and punching his girlfriend until she appeared to be unconscious. The woman, who was 12-weeks pregnant, miscarried as a result of her injuries. Minnesota law allows a person to be charged in the death of a preborn child, though such cases have not been commonly prosecuted. Kyle Christopherson, communications specialist for the Minnesota Supreme Court, said 12 people have been charged with either attempted murder or manslaughter of a

child in the womb since 1999 -- but only half were convicted. Minnesota law states that a pregnancy terminated through the execution of another felony is subject to a separate criminal charge.

NO-FAULT DIVORCE REFORM NEEDED

(EP News)--No-fault divorce has been the law in all 50 states for decades, but three states want to put restrictions on no-fault divorce. Under no-fault divorce, all that's required is one unhappy spouse. He or she doesn't need a reason to end the marriage. Since no-fault divorce swept the nation in the 1970s, 38 million marriages have dissolved, according to Mike McManus, cofounder of Marriage Savers. "[No-fault divorce] has destroyed or . . . scarred the lives of 35 million children who are now, as they grow up, finding it very difficult to bond with someone of the opposite sex," he said. More than 30 states have passed constitutional amendments or other legislation affirming marriage as being between one man and one woman. Now, Michigan, Wisconsin and Virginia are considering reform of divorce laws that would include mutual-consent divorce proposals; meaning both spouses must agree to split, if there are children involved. The proposals include exceptions for abuse and adultery.

UNBORN CHILD PAIN AWARENESS ACT REINTRODUCED

(EP News)--U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kansas, has reintroduced the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. The legislation would require abortionists to inform mothers who seek abortions 20 weeks after fertilization that their child is able to feel pain. "It is a scientific, medical fact that unborn children feel pain," Brownback said in announcing the legislation. "We know that unborn children can experience pain based upon anatomical, functional, physiological and behavioral indicators that are correlated with pain in children and adults. Mothers seeking an abortion have the right to know that their unborn children can feel pain." The bill would also have the abortionist recommend anesthesia for the child, if the mother chooses to continue with an abortion, in hopes it will make it clear that she is aborting a human being.

WYOMING LAWMAKERS SEEK TO BLOCK OUT-OF-STATE GAY UNIONS

(EP News)--The Wyoming Legislature is going to consider a measure to exempt the state from giving legal recognition to same-sex couples married in a country or state that allows it, 365Gay.com reported. Wyoming has a law that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. The proposed legislation would protect that law from potential legal challenges. Republican Sen. Gerald E. Geis, one of the bill's sponsors, said the people in his district want to preserve marriage. "They didn't want people from

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other states that can be married to come in and say they get the same status in Wyoming," he said. Republican Rep. Owen Petersen is sponsoring the bill in the House. "In the past 30 years," he said, "statistics support the fact that with the loss of marriage and a stable home environment there are more adverse impacts on society with crime and with various other things that cause a deterioration of our whole country."

WISCONSIN OFFICIALS CAN TAKE "MODIFIED" OATH

(EP News)--The Madison, Wis., City Council voted Jan. 16 to allow members of various city committees to denounce the state's constitutional amendment protecting marriage when they take their oath of office, The Associated Press reported. The 14-4 vote means as many as 500 elected and appointed officials can add a statement to their oath -- which is an oath to uphold the state constitution -- that they are taking it under protest because the marriage amendment "besmirches our constitution." Included in the statement is a promise to work to overturn the amendment and prevent discrimination resulting from its passage. Wisconsin voters last November overwhelmingly approved an amendment that defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

NEW MEXICO TO CONSIDER MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

(EP News)--New Mexico will consider a state constitutional amendment that would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman, the *Farmington Daily Times* reported. Rep. Gloria Vaughn, a Republican from Alamogordo, N.M., introduced the resolution Jan. 15. "It's the right thing to do," she said. "Maybe children would grow up with both parents." The resolution must pass both the state House and Senate and be signed by the governor before it will be placed on the ballot to be approved by voters.

STEM CELL CONTROVERSY TAKES HISTORIC TURNS

(EP News)--On Jan. 11, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 253-174 to expand federal funding of controversial embryonic stem-cell research. Democrats gained 30 seats in last November's election, but the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act got only 15 more votes than when an identical was introduced last year. President Bush vetoed the bill last year. It has so far been the only veto of his presidency.

A MARRIAGE MINORITY

(EP News)--According to a new Census Bureau report, for the first time more American women are living without a husband than with one. While only 35 percent of women were unmarried in 1950, that number shot up to 49 percent in 2000. By 2005, a majority of women -- 51 percent

-- was unmarried. There are several factors for this shift, including increased educational opportunities for both men and women, and the fact that women are living longer as widows. Some advocates on both sides of the family and marriage divide have criticized the analysis because it takes into account women as young as 15 years of age.

AMERICANS GIVE LESS TODAY THAN DURING DEPRESSION

(EP News)--An annual study of church giving shows most church money goes to activities within the congregation collecting the money. Only a small percentage goes to outreach, evangelism, or benevolence activities outside the congregation. Sylvia and John Ronsville of Champaign, Ill.-based Empty Tomb Inc., just released their 16th annual study on church giving. They say that Christianity in the United States is becoming a "maintenance organization" that -- if trends continue -- soon will be spending 100 percent of its resources on maintaining its current programs and activities. The study finds that while donations to churches have increased 78 percent in real dollars since 1968, income has risen 116 percent over the same period. The average U.S. congregation member gave 2.56 percent of personal income to the church in 2004, a decline for the fourth straight year. That's down 18 percent from 1968, and below giving levels from the early 1930s at the height of the Depression. Instead, Americans spend almost four times as much on entertainment as on church giving.

TV VIOLENCE CONTINUES TO RISE

(EP News)--Violence on primetime TV has increased 75 percent since 1998 according to a study by the Parents Television Council (PTC). The PTC highlighted the fall 2005 viewing season as one of the most violent ever. ABC registered a 309 percent overall increase in violent acts. Violence between 8 and 9 p.m. -- the "family hour" -- increased by 45 percent. Jeff McIntyre, a spokesman for the American Psychological Association, said the increasingly violent programs may lead some children to learn hostility as a way of life. "That means they will become less sympathetic to victims of violent acts or to counter it," he said. "It's also possible they may develop unrealistic fears about becoming a victim of violence."

EDUCATORS BOO EDUCATION SECRETARY'S SCHOOL CHOICE REMARKS

(EP News)--Margaret Spellings, the U.S. secretary of education, was booed by members of the National School Boards Association in late January when she brought up school choice. Spellings was sharing the president's vision for the No Child Left Behind Act when she met with the rude reaction from the crowd at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C. She said there were about 1,800 chronically failing schools in the nation -- out of about 90,000 schools nationwide, and that students and parents at these schools and others need better options.

- INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS - POPE DECRIES LOW BIRTH RATES

(EP News)--Pro-family groups are applauding Pope Benedict XVI for recent comments on the population decline in European countries. In a Vatican speech, he said low birth-rates in Europe indicate that many couples no longer want children. On average, European countries like Italy and Spain have little more than one-child per couple. It takes two- to three-child families to sustain a country's population. Larry Jacobs, vice president of the Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society at the World Congress of Families, said the pope sees the birth dearth as a reflection of Europe's spiritual condition. "Church attendance rates have been documented and have been declining for years," he said. "Almost in the majority of Europe now we see church attendance is almost below five percent."

NORTH KOREA NAMED TOP CHRISTIAN PERSECUTOR

(EP News)--For the fifth straight year, North Korea has been named the worst country for Christian persecution, according to a comprehensive survey released today by Open Doors, a ministry that supports persecuted believers around the world. "It is certainly not a surprise that North Korea remains No. 1," said Dr. Carl Moeller, president and chief executive officer of Open Doors USA. "Tens of thousands of believers are in captivity in the hermit country. There is certainly no other nation in the world where Christians are being persecuted in such a horrible and systematic manner." The list ranks countries according to the intensity of persecution Christians face for actively pursuing their faith. The list is compiled based on the answers to 50 questions covering various aspects of religious freedom from Open Doors' indigenous contacts, field workers and persecuted believers. Following North Korea, the report lists Saudi Arabia, Iran, Somalia and Maldives -- all of which made the top of last year's survey. Rounding out the top ten: Yemen, Bhutan, Vietnam, Laos and Afghanistan.

BLAIR SIDES WITH HOMOSEXUALS IN U.K. ADOPTION BATTLE

(EP News)--In the U.K., a fierce battle for homosexual adoption has gained a powerful ally in Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has refused to allow Catholic adoption agencies to opt-out from placing children with same-sex couples. The Parliament has yet to vote on the new "Equality Act," but if passed it would forbid any group from "discriminating in the provision of goods, facilities, and services based on sexual orientation." The Catholic Church had pleaded with the prime minister to grant them an exemption. As the Archbishop of York said, "The freedom of conscience cannot be made subject to legislation, however well-meaning."

POPE CALLS ITALIAN PROPOSAL "SUBVERSIVE"

(EP News)--On Feb. 12, Pope Benedict XVI sharply criticized a proposed law, just approved by the Italian cabinet, granting cohabiting couples certain legal rights. The pope called the pending law a "subversive" plan. "No law made by man can subvert the law made by the Creator without society being drastically damaged in its foundations," the pontiff told a group of Catholic academics meeting for a seminar on natural law. The government of Prime Minister Romano Prodi is determined to press ahead. The bill grants Italy's estimated 560,000 cohabitating couples many benefits traditionally reserved for marriage -- including inheritance rights, welfare benefits and input on medical decisions. Deputy Speaker of the Senate Roberto Calderoli said, "They are destroying the family. This is just a Trojan horse to allow marriage between gays."

BRITISH BORN MUSLIMS MORE EXTREME THAN PARENTS

(EP News)--According to a new poll of over 1,000 British Muslims, British-born Muslims hold more extreme views than their parents who immigrated to Great Britain for economic and religious freedom. The poll found that more than a third of 16-24 year-olds wanted to live under Islamic Sharia law, compared with just 17 percent of those 55 and older. About 31 percent of young Muslims said that they believed that if a Muslim converted to another religion, he or she should be put to death.



Bible Tells How

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Man, therefore, unlike beasts and contrary to the opinions of fatalistic philosophers, is called upon in the Bible to participate and cooperate in the attainment of his own destiny. If this seems too great a challenge to little souls, it is simply because they "**judge yourselves [themselves] unworthy of everlasting life**" (Acts 13:46).

Part of God's purpose for His elect (Eph. 1:4) is "**that we should be holy.**" We can be sure that His purpose will be accomplished, but it will be accomplished through the appointed means and not otherwise.

MEANS PROVIDED

With comparatively little human instrumentality, God has provided the blood of Christ, the written Word, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit as means of holiness.

True, God used the wicked hands of men (Acts 2:23) to shed the blood; true, the Word came by means of holy men of God (II Pet. 1:21) who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and true, the Holy Spirit works largely in and through His people (John 14:17).

Yet you and I had nothing to do with providing these means. They are God's

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Bible Tells How

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provision for us, and if God used men in providing them, they were other men, mostly of other generations and unaware even of our then future existence. So we can classify the blood, the Word, and the Spirit as means provided apart from any act of our own.

MEANS OF MERIT

“Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with [through] his own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate” (Heb. 13:12). **“And almost all things are cleansed in blood according to the law, and without shedding of blood is no remission”** (Heb. 9:22 improved translation).

Only upon the merits of the blood of Jesus could God justly separate us from our sins and set us apart from a lost world as the chosen objects of His redeeming love. So far is this true that His righteousness in passing by the sins of Old Testament saints did not become manifest until His display of justice on Calvary (Rom. 3:24-26).

Moreover, the same blood of Christ which alone merits the sanctification of unworthy sinners to become the people of God--that same blood is the meritorious ground of continual cleansing:

“If we habitually walk in their light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son keeps on cleansing us from all sin” (I John 1:7 imp. trans.).

MEANS OF TRUTH

“Sanctify them in thy truth: thy word is truth. . . For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth” (John 17:17;19 imp. trans.).

As in all God's work, so in the work of salvation and the “things that accompany salvation,” His spoken or written Word has a prominent part. **“I have given them thy word,”** said Jesus in John 17:14, and then, remarking the effect of this Word in making His disciples already a people **“not of this world,”** He went on to pray for their sanctification on continually higher ground.

Note that the same Word of God by which His people are called to the beginning of a new life set apart from the world is the Word by which TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE SANCTIFIED TO A MORE PERFECT UNION WITH CHRIST. All attempts to unionize a Christianity heedless to God's written Word can result only in unions with anti-Christ.

MEANS OF POWER

“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through [in] sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (II Thess. 2:13). This

statement concerning the Thessalonian saints is true of all genuine believers. It is the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference between what some theologians name the “general” and “effectual” calls of the gospel.

Stating it otherwise, on the divine side of the Holy Spirit's work of conviction (John 16:8-10) and regeneration (John 1:13; 3:5-8) is the power that converts a lost sinner into a saint. So Paul and Sosthenes, reminding the Corinthians of their former sinful state, declared:

“And such were some of you: but ye washed yourselves, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:11 imp. trans.).

Once more, note that the same Spirit Who set us apart unto God at the beginning of our Christian experience is He Who now provides sanctifying power in our lives:

“If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” **“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, [in] through the power of the Holy Ghost”** (Rom. 8:10; 15:13).

MEANS APPLIED

Some other means of holiness are also of divine provision, but call for active reception or application on our part. Without this personal participation or application, we have no promise in God's Word of any spiritual benefits to us from His provision.

Among the applied means of holiness, or the means of effecting holiness in our individual lives, may be mentioned *faith, prayer, will, and discipline.*

MEANS OF FAITH

Jesus sent the apostle Paul to the Gentiles **“to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in [toward] me”** (Acts 26:18).

“According to your faith” (Mark 9:29 etc.) is a principle of wide application. Faith, too, is a sanctifying means not only at our entrance to the Christian life but also in maintaining a holy walk:

“The just shall live by [from] faith” (Rom. 1:17). **“For we walk by faith, not by sight”** (II Cor. 5:7).

MEANS OF PRAYER

It seems hardly necessary to multiply Scripture references to show the need of prayer to attain a great degree of holiness. But see for examples Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:2-4; I Thessalonians 3:11-13, etc.

Too often it is as true of holiness as of less important blessings that **“ye have not, because ye ask not”** (James 4:2).

God knows how to give good gifts to His children, and Jesus commands us:

“Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and ye shall find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened unto you: for everyone that keeps on asking receiveth; and he that keeps on seeking findeth; and to him that keeps on knocking it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-11 imp. trans.).

MEANS OF WILL

“This is the will of God, even your sanctification” (I Thess. 4:3).

So we need have no doubt as to God's will in this matter. But what about our will? In a general way, we may concede that our will ought always to be in accord with the will of God. But is it? The Scriptures clearly call upon us to exercise our own will in sanctification.

The very command, **“Be ye holy, for I am holy,”** shows our responsibility for holiness. And in I Thessalonians 4:4, the sanctification that is God's will is explained as meaning **“that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”**

“Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). Habitually consider yourself dead to sin but alive to God--this is sanctification, and this is an act of will. In fact, the whole sixth chapter of Romans is an appeal to the will of baptized believers to practice what they professed in their baptism.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, through the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (logical) service” (Rom. 12:1 imp. trans.).

MEANS OF DISCIPLINE

“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. . . for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:6-10 imp. trans.).

The entire twelfth chapter of Hebrews should be studied carefully in this connection. God will not permit His children to persist in sin without chastisement of which all His legitimate children are partakers. Verse 8 alone disproves all claims to sinless perfection in mortal life, verse 10 tells us the purpose of God's chastening work, and verses 11-13 throw upon us the responsibility for a proper response to this chastening.

Assuming that we are not bastards (verse 8), but legitimate children of God, if we refuse to progress in holiness by any other means, God assures us that He will beat it into us, even if to do so He must beat us to death. See Psalm 89:30-32; Isaiah 22:14; I John 5:16; I Corinthians 5:5; 11:29-32; etc.



Paul Preferred Original Recipe

By Curtis Pugh
of Bocs, Romania



Read on and you will get to the Kentucky Fried Chicken part. But chicken is not really my subject. I have a far more serious one in mind: that of foreign missions.

So while I will write about Paul's preference for Original Recipe, I hope to use a bit of satire to make some far more serious points!

The reason I write is that some good brothers in Christ are opposing the practice of giving financial support and assistance from the United States to poorer countries. I understand that one of them, a godly missionary, published some time ago a paper against supporting national workers, etc. I believe their position to be both unscriptural and unreasonable. This is the reason I write this article. I do not mean to attack anyone and will not mention any names. These brethren have the highest motives. Of that I am convinced. They believe, as I do, that missionary work ought to result in the establishment of autonomous and indigenous New Testament Churches. But they are convinced that by not supporting national preachers and not giving assistance to Churches in impoverished countries is the best way to go about establishing scriptural Churches.

I propose to deal with this issue by first of all using a bit of “sanctified imagination” based on the Scriptures and then by looking at a scriptural incident. I believe these two approaches will be enough to make it clear that these good brothers are in error on this matter.

Perhaps I should, first of all, make it clear that it is my goal to establish New Testament Churches that are autonomous and indigenous – self-governing and self-sustaining. Perhaps I should also state that none of the three licensed national (Romanian) preachers with whom we labor receive any financial support or help for their preaching and evangelism. We do have two men who labor with us, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. They are paid a token wage out of work funds and are supported some by Churches in the States. They help in the translation and production of sound, sovereign grace, landmark, missionary Baptist literature. One of them is a licensed preacher, but for his preaching he receives nothing.

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I should also state that I do understand the importance of accountability. I know of one Church in the States that has had a sad experience or experiences with at least one national preacher who was a member of a Church in a third-world country. There was little or no accountability to the supporting Churches and the national preacher was living in bigamy, I believe. No members of that man's Church would or could make known to the supporting Churches in the States what was going on. So this U.S. Church, according to the last information I had, will not support a national preacher who is not a member of a Stateside Church. Of course each Church is free to determine the criteria on which they base support and this was theirs, at least at that time. Accountability is indeed an issue that must be dealt with and each Church should be careful to know what really is going on as far as the lives and efforts of national preachers are concerned. There are charlatans in third-world countries as well as in the United States!

So let us proceed with our imaginary look back into the Bible – basing our imagination on Bible facts – and going by the rules of these brethren who oppose supporting national preachers and workers. So here we go: imagine along with me, but according to their rules. It is a hot summer day on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ and two co-workers have walked the entire day and finally see their temporary destination ahead – a large city which we will not name. Their travel by foot on the stone-paved Roman road has been hard on the well-worn sandals of Titus and Tychicus, Paul's coworkers. As they trudge onward toward the distant city, Paul calls Titus to his side. "Titus," he says, "not too far ahead is a highway junction. When we get there, Tychicus and I will stop and rest a bit. You know that he has been ill for awhile and I think he needs to be still a bit. But I want you to take the road to the harbor and there enquire about the cost and availability of a ticket for me across the bay – just for me alone." Titus looks down at his worn out sandals, but agrees to make the extra trip for Paul and for the sake of the gospel. Paul notices Titus' downward look and says, "I know your sandals are about worn out. Maybe you can find some discarded ones with a few miles left in them. I have seen such discarded sandals along these Roman roads before. I would give you my nearly-new ones, but you know the rules."

Now it is a fact: hungry men can always smell food and hungry preachers are especially good at smelling frying chicken. Why, some have claimed to be able to tell if it is dark meat or white

meat that is sizzling in the skillet at any given moment! And these early Baptist preachers, in my imaginary view, are not so different. As they trudge along on the way towards the highway junction where Titus is to leave them, they reach the outskirts of the city. As they move forward these hungry men begin to smell fried chicken! Sure enough, just up ahead they see the familiar red and white signs and the smiling face of the world famous Kentucky Colonel!

As they reach the KFC store, Paul turns in toward the door. He pushes open the door and the wonderfulness of air conditioning rushes upon him. His traveling companions hesitate, but Paul says, "Come on in brothers: it's cool in here! Put our luggage out of the way near the door and slide into one of those empty booths over there. I'll be right with you."

Paul steps up the counter, looks over the items available and orders. "I'll have your 3 piece box complete with slaw, beans, fries and a biscuit. Give me a coke with that, too." "Original or Extra Crispy?" queries the clerk. "Oh, I'll have Original," Paul replies. He liked the Original Recipe best of all.

Paul takes his tray, stops by the coke dispenser, and proceeds to the booth where Titus and Tychicus wait for him. Sliding in, Paul says, "Let's pray." And he proceeds to offer thanks for their day and the miles traveled as well as for the food. After taking a long sip of his coke, Paul opens his KFC box and looks hungrily at the chicken and other goodies inside. Then he notices the hungry looks of his companions. "I'm sorry, brothers, but you know the rules. We must establish autonomous and indigenous Churches and the Church in Antioch that sent me out gave me strict instructions. 'No national workers or preachers are to be supported with Antioch Church money!' You know that neither of you are citizens of America – er – I mean Antioch. You are gentiles and citizens of other places than America – I mean Antioch. I would be violating our Church's principles if I fed you out of Antiochian funds – the Churches we would establish would not be indigenous or autonomous if I fed you. You'll just have to find someone up ahead to give you something to eat and drink. Now excuse me while I eat and then we can be on our way."

Now, dear readers, I have tried to use a bit of satire. We have imagined a scene from the travels of Paul and two of those "national preachers" whom God raised up to help him. We have followed the "rules" of our brethren who say it is wrong to support or even financially assist national preachers. We know from the Bible that Paul did not start out from his home Church with these two men, but they were "recruited" by God along the way and were of great help to Paul in both starting and strengthening Churches. Can you honestly imagine

that Paul would not or could not provide food and lodging as well as for other needs of the men who labored with him? **"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"** (1 Cor. 9:7). Did Paul and the Antioch Church expect these men to do mission work at their own expense? Of course not! Paul and his Gentile companions, "national preachers" who labored with him, did not go to war at their own expense! I believe it is reasonable to say that they traveled together, ate together, lodged together, etc., etc., using funds supplied to them by, among others, the Church in Antioch that sent Paul out. If that is the case, then we ought to support godly, sound national preachers and workers as God leads. But if you can imagine the Kentucky Fried Chicken event described above really taking place – I mean if you think Paul did not share mission funds with his national co-workers – if you think the Antioch Church forbade the support of these national preachers – then you surely have a different understanding of the Scriptures than I have and you ought to lobby against U.S. money being sent to national preachers and poor Churches outside her national boundaries.

Now let us take a look at the second thing some of these brethren oppose: the matter of U.S. Churches giving financial aid to Churches in impoverished conditions. Do we have anything in the Bible to guide us here? Why yes, we do. The Jerusalem Church became impoverished for several reasons. They had used up their common funds and were desperately in need. Their personal properties had been sold, the money given to the Church for the support of all and now the bankrupt Church had no way to feed them as had been their custom. Right or wrong, that was the case.

Paul determined to make up a great Gentile love offering for the Jerusalem Church and to take it to them, along with representatives of those Churches that contributed to the Poor Jerusalem Church Fund (my name for it, of course). Paul wrote: **"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain"** (Rom. 15:25-28).

Now Paul did this very thing: he collected money from more affluent Churches and personally took it to a Church in need – i.e. the Church in

Jerusalem. Will our brothers who oppose Churches in more affluent countries helping poorer Churches in other countries say that Paul was wrong in doing this? Will they say that because the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem accepted this great financial gift that she lost her autonomy and could no longer govern herself? Will they say that she ceased to be an indigenous Church? Will they say that the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia sinned by sending so much money to the Jerusalem Church? I doubt they will say these things.

What this great Gentile love offering did was to help bind the Jewish Churches together more closely with the Gentile Churches. It showed the respect and love that the Gentile Churches had for the first Church – the Jewish Church at Jerusalem, for indeed the daughter Churches and granddaughter Churches were indebted to the Jerusalem Church. And without a doubt, it was the right thing for them to do. Paul said so!

And neither the sending of this great financial gift nor the receiving of it changed the independence, autonomy, or indigenous nature of either the givers or the receiver. This offering did no harm and certainly did good! It did not make the Jerusalem saints who accepted the money into parasites and it did not make the Gentile saints who gave it into their overlords. But it surely demonstrated the love of the Gentile Churches for the first Church and it surely demonstrated many of the principles taught by Christ.

It goes without saying that there are abuses by some who claim to be true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ in poorer countries. No doubt some are scam artists. One friend of mine who had dealings with national preachers in a third-world country said this to me, "Brother Curtis, there are preachers in (blank country) who would preach anything I wanted them to preach for \$50 a month. And for \$100 a month, they would believe it!" I am sure this is the case. We have found such men in Romania – men who "know what side their bread is buttered on" and who look out for the man or organization that offers the most money and benefits and work for him. These men stand for no strong doctrines because those who support them do not want them to preach "Calvinism."

But the way to eliminate this problem is not to throw out the baby with the bath water, in my opinion. Our Churches ought not to stop supporting national preachers or stop giving to help needy Churches in poorer countries, but rather need to exercise more care in selecting those national preachers whom they consider worthy of support and in giving to meet the needs of suffering, financially deprived Churches.

Let me suggest some practical things that pastors and members can do

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CELLBLOCK TO CELLBLOCK

By David G. Hoffman

Encouragement and thoughts from a prisoner to other prisoners and readers.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried" (Rev. 2:10).

A Heart for Gardening

Greetings, grace, and peace to you, dear reader. I hope this finds you doing well and in the best of spirits.

Last time there was a typo I'd like to correct: the name of the class I completed is Peer Health Education (P-E-E-R, as in my peers, my fellow prisoners). The idea behind the class is to educate as many prisoners as possible about diseases prevalent in prisons so they in turn can inform their peers and hopefully help prevent the spreading of these diseases. If you have access to this class or one like it, by all means take it. You never know when what you learn may make someone think twice before participating in risky behavior.

Now for an update. I've been transferred to the Jester III Unit, which is a medical unit and I'll be assigned here for the foreseeable future.

As for my health, well, I've still not been diagnosed but I have been back in the hospital. While there the doctor doubled my water pill dosage and I lost 13 lbs. of excess fluid. Then they put a tube through my back into my right lung and drew out 23.3 oz. of fluid. The doctor said it was no wonder I couldn't breathe! But for now I'm breathing better and moving around better. The lab is testing the fluid from my lung to determine what's causing it and as soon as I know you'll read about it here. Your continued prayers, dear reader, are much appreciated.

And as I've said before, I cannot receive mail from prisoners but if any of my free-world readers would like to comment on this column or any other here is my new address: David G. Hoffman #809805; 3 Jester Road; Richmond, TX 77469.

This month's subject is dear to my heart and I hope yours as well.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12; emphasis DH).

No true believer sought after God, it was impossible for him or her to do so. For before you believed you had only a sin nature and could do only what that nature led you to do---sin without regret. Seeking after God was totally against your nature. And it's totally against the nature

of unbelievers today. They are spiritually **"dead in trespasses and sins"** (Eph. 2:1). But what does the first clause of this verse say? **"And you hath he quickened [make alive]"** (Eph. 2:1).

Now if the unbeliever cannot seek after God because it's against his or her nature then how do we get to this quickening business?

Thus saith the Lord, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44).

Does this mean God the Father drags the unbeliever kicking and screaming to Jesus Christ? No it does not. God, in His sovereignty, has provided a means and a way.

Thus saith the Lord, **"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"** (I Cor. 1:21).

And this preaching must be mixed with faith **"for unto us [Gentiles] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the nation of Israel]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it"** (Heb. 4:2).

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), and is bestowed by **"Jesus the author and finisher of our faith"** (Heb. 12:2).

What does this have to do with you and me? Well if you're a believer you should have a desire to preach the gospel to the lost. You don't have to have a pulpit or a large audience---you can start with your cellie or neighbor. Just remember, we can plant the seed of the gospel and water that seed but it's up to God to make it grow. For thus saith the Word, **"Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase"** (I Cor. 3:7).

May the Lord give you a heart for the lost today, dear reader, for such were we all at one time.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen" (Eph. 6:24).

Bro. Jeff, you remain as always in my thoughts and prayers.

Bro. McSwain and Bro. Hilton, thank you for your continued encouragement and fellowship. Y'all are in my prayers as well.

Bro. Kevin, you are not alone. Stay strong in the Word and keep fighting the good fight. You remain in my thoughts and prayers, too.

Bro. Danny, it's not so bad here. I kinda like the dorm life. I'll be praying for you and may the Lord continue to draw you closer to Himself.

Krystal Ruthann, I love and miss you dearly. My continued prayer for you is that the Lord draw you to Himself and make you His own. You are in my thoughts and prayers daily.



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that might help resolve the problems encountered in dealing with national preachers and needy Churches. (1) Listen to other sound missionaries on the field: if they speak cautiously about a man or the needs of a Church, respect that caution. They may not know hard facts about what is going on, but might be able to tell you their opinion about a man or a Church. Certainly they are in a position to observe and sense what is going on and can be helpful in dealing with this kind of thing. (2) Send pastors to various mission fields -- both at home and abroad! A week or two in the home of a missionary, visiting and observing the life of national preachers can be revealing to the observant and thoughtful person. Obviously for such a short space of time, the wool can be pulled over the eyes of the unsuspecting, but if a pastor has access to a good translator (if there is a language problem) and can visit with the people to whom the national preacher preaches, it can be most revealing. (3) Encourage them to go and even send members of your Church to visit various missionaries and see for themselves what the national preachers and workers are doing. Such "unofficial visits" are often good means of real fact-finding. (4) Require accountability. Insist upon regular prayer letters and financial reports. Ask questions about anything you don't understand or about which you have a concern. Don't be overly impressed with crowds and numbers. Large crowds can be "staged" and "results" can be misleading. (5) Bring national preachers to America for an extended visit in your Church. Bear the expense in order to get acquainted with the man. Engage him in long conversations about his doctrine, practice, and use of the finances you have sent to him or propose to send to him. (6) Require national preachers and workers to fill out doctrinal and practical questionnaires and keep these on file. Review these from time to time in the light of what you know is going on in the life and work of the national preacher. And finally (7) the Church ought to be earnestly prayerful in considering which national worker or which poor Church to support. There are difficulties in communication many times because of

language differences, but the Holy Spirit has the ability to let Churches know what they ought to be doing towards missions. Over the years, as a missionary, I have been surprised, flabbergasted and sometimes really disappointed in learning why some Churches do and do not support missionaries and mission projects. I am convinced that much prayer is a key in resolving any difficulties encountered in deciding which national workers and poor Churches ought to be supported financially.

These are suggestions. I do not have all the answers. But I am convinced that we violate the teaching and pattern of the Scriptures if Churches in more affluent countries absolutely cease giving financial help to national preachers and poor Churches in needy countries. May the Lord Jesus Christ guide His Churches in carrying out the Great Commission!



ANNOUNCEMENT

ABANDONED TRUTH: THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE AND COMPANION STUDY GUIDE BEING PRINTED

Elder Tom Ross has decided to publish **Abandoned Truth: The Doctrines of Grace** once again. **Abandoned Truth** was first published in 1991, then again in 1996. It has been out of print for several years.

Abandoned Truth is a Scriptural, concise, and readable study of the doctrines of grace from A to Z. Each point of sovereign grace is explained in detail and common objections are answered from the Scripture. It has been used in Bible Schools, Institutes, Sunday School classes, small group studies, and by Home School groups through the years.

He has also developed an optional **Companion Study Guide** with 304 questions that have the answers or where to find them in the back of the workbook. This was previously used as a workbook for a Correspondence College Course. The **Companion Study Guide** will be a tremendous help to those who want to be thoroughly acquainted with these precious truths.

Prepaid orders for the book are being taken until May 15th. **IMPORTANT: If I don't receive your pre-paid order by 5-15-07 then it will be assumed that you do not want a copy of the book.**

Once the book is printed there will be very few copies available for purchase. Plans are to list the names of individuals, schools, and churches who pre-paid in the front cover of the book so when you send your payment please let him know how you want to be acknowledged (include your website if you wish).

PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS & SHIPPING RATES: \$15 per book plus shipping (Book Only) Add \$7 per book for the companion Study Guide with 304 questions. 1 book add \$4 shipping, 2-6 books add \$8 shipping, 7-15 books add \$14 shipping, 16-24 books add \$20 shipping.

\$12 per book on orders of 25 or more plus \$20 Shipping. 25 copies cost \$320.00 (Includes shipping). (If you want Study Guides add \$7 per copy)

\$10 per book on orders of 100 or more with FREE SHIPPING. 100 copies cost \$1,000.00. (If you want Study Guides add \$7 per copy). Send check or money order to: Tom Ross, 6339 County Rd. 15, South Point, OH 45680. Please call 740-894-1455 if paying by credit card. A 4% credit card processing fee will be added to the total of all credit card orders. Otherwise send your check or money order to the above address.

Mini-Edition by Joseph Harris

Chairman of Biblical Studies
Southeastern Baptist
College, Laurel, Mississippi
www.miniedition.net



And the Answer isGod

There are three great questions in life that have been asked by philosophers, preachers, humanists, scientists, farmers, and well, basically, people from all walks in life have asked these questions. From where did I come? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Though phrased differently by some, those are the main questions asked when searching for truth and the meaning of life. At the risk of sounding simplistic and unscholarly (which is not difficult for me to do) I say the answer to all three questions is God. Let me explain by asking the questions again.

From where did man come? What is the origin of man? There are really only two options for this one. They are:

God- God is creator of everything. As Paul states in Acts 17, when preaching to the intellectuals on Mars Hill, God is the author of plant life, animal life, human life and eternal life. God created the dirt, then made man from the dirt. We are sustained and nourished from the dirt. Both plants and animals get nourishment from the dirt and man eats plants and animals. Everything we eat is nothing more than chemically changed dirt.

Goo- Or maybe we came from nothing that exploded, then formed at the right temperature, on the right planet, in the right substance, at the right time. Maybe life came from the random chance of proteins and acids that formed into a goo, which then produced a cell which then evolved into a cluster of cells, and then grew, eventually, into Grampa. Then again, maybe not.

What is the purpose of man? Again, there are only two options for answers and they are:

Glorify God- To live for God is to put Him first in all decisions and actions. He is to be the center of your thinking and philosophy of life. He is to be acknowledged and worshipped daily, bowing to His will in all matters, events, and circumstances.

Glorify Self- You either live for yourself or someone else. You tend to the needs of others or yourself. In serving others, we serve God. In serving self, we glorify self and not God. Self must be dethroned and God enthroned.

Where is man going? And again, there are two basic answers which are:

Glory- The eternal presence of God is the ultimate destination of the believer. After death and judgment, then the

eternal presence of God will be enjoyed by all believers on a new earth in a new Heaven. There is no other destiny, except:

Grave- By grave, I mean more than a burial plot. I am speaking of death, hell and the grave, or the second death. All the lost in hell will eventually be delivered to the great white throne judgment, then be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. They will then be FOREVER separated from God, yet retain a state of consciousness. The knowledge and experience of eternal separation from God is the greatest punishment of the lost.

When GOD is the answer to life's three greatest questions, then hope abounds. To use a cliché, NO GOD, NO HOPE; KNOW GOD, KNOW HOPE.

The Rantings
and
Ravings
of
Brother
Ritechus
N.
Dignation



Sermon of Conglomeration

Let's talk about preachers. Why not? Ever' body does on Sunday at the dinner table after church. Let's just make it official. When it comes to preachers and preachin', there's all kinds. I know some short preachers, tall preachers, fat, skinny, and even a few handsome preachers. I've also met some ugly preachers. I've heard some good preachin' and I've heard some sorry preachin'. I've endured long sermons and enjoyed short ones.

Here's a word of the wise to preachers. Bale your hay. That's what old Brother Gerald Kellar taught us preacher boys at the institute. Stand up, speak up, and shut up. The direct result of hay not baled is long sermons. I remember once in preachin' class, one fellow preached so long, half the class left out to go get a haircut. Not to be outdone, a preacher boy got up the next week, preached longer, so Brother Kellar started shaking his watch in the air. He never got the message. The next time he preached, Brother Kellar brought a calendar and tore pages out during the sermon. To quote my wife, Sister Ritechus N Dignation, "The mind can only absorb what the bottom can endure."

The most classic mess of a sermon I ever heard came from Archibald T. Purvis. He preached what I call a sermon of conglomeration. From the best of my memory, it went something like this:

"Open your Bibles to the book of Genesis

while I preach to you about a man named Adam. God made Adam and put him in a garden and he worked until he got tired, then fell asleep. While he was asleep, an enemy came and sowed tares in his field. When he awoke, he wist not that his strength was gone from him. So he left the garden-uh, and went into a far country and there he married 700 wives and 300 concubines. Then began great tribulation-uh. Can I get an amen-uh? Now I want you to know-uh, that he met a man named Noah, who took him for a ride on his boat-uh. And while he was on top of the boat, a great whirlwind came and knocked him off the boat and he fell into the water and was swallowed by a great fish-uh. And he remained in the belly of the fish-uh, for 40 days and 40 nights-uh. Then the fish-uh was caught in a net, and the net began to break-uh and the fish spit him out-uh and he fell on top of Peter who was praying on a roof, and he got tangled up in a great sheet-uh. He then fell out of the sheet-uh into a bottomless pit-uh and remained there for 1000 years, until he was loosed for a little season. He then went to the city of Gadara, and there wandered among the tombs forever-uh and ever-uh. Amen."

Now that's apostolic preachin'. The apostles went every where preaching the gospel. So did Archibald. He started in Genesis, than went everywhere preaching the gospel. Preacher, you may wax eloquent in long sermons, but more than likely, your just repeatin' yourself and probably are just a legend in your own mind. Bale your hay.

--Brother Ritechus N Dignation

P.S. Thanks to Mrs. Sofilthy McNasty for inspiration of my sermon of conglomeration from the "parable" she often quotes in her program.



The World in the New Testament

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

Since there is so much confusion concerning the meaning of the word "world" in the New Testament it behooves us to make a serious study of it. If you and I are not willing to accept the facts connected with this word, we are not honest with the Word of God. If I give this word a meaning that I cannot back up with the Scriptures just in order to make it comply with my preconceived ideas I am putting more value on my finite thinking than I am on the infinite Word of God.

In Romans 3:19 we read, "**Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**" I firmly believe the world

here means all of Adam's race. Then in I Corinthians 1:21 we read, "**For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.**" Here again the world takes in all mankind. I do not believe anyone can deny that the world in these two verses includes all of the human race.

But when we come to Luke 2:1, we have a different story. Here we read, "**And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.**" No one in his right mind would dare say that "all the world" here included the people in China and India over whom Caesar Augustus had no authority, or the American Indians whom he did not know existed. The world here can only mean the Roman world.

In John 7:4 we see the expression "**shew thyself to the world.**" Most certainly this means the Jewish world. At that time the Jews had no desire to show anything to the Gentiles except contempt. Then in verse 7 our Lord said, "**The world cannot hate you.**" It would be ignorance personified for anyone to say the world in this verse included the people Christ was talking to. In John 12:19 the Pharisees said, "**behold, the world is gone after him.**" Surely no one would say the world here included the Pharisees. And in John 14:17 we read, "**Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive. . .but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**" Here are two groups of people, the world that could not know the Holy Spirit, and Christ's disciples who did know Him. Then in verse 19 we see two groups, the world that seeth Christ no more and His disciples who will see Him. And in verse 22 Judas asks, "**How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?**" Here these two groups are still before us.

In John 15:18 and also in verse 19 we see the world pitted against the Lord's people. And in John 16:20 we are told that the saints will weep and lament when Christ goes back to the Father, but the world will rejoice. And in John 17:9 Jesus says, "**I pray for them**" and in verse 20 He says, "**Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.**" He prayed for His people who were living at that time, and also for all of us who have believed on Him since that time. But if you notice in verse 9 He says, "**I pray not for the world.**" Here are some people He prayed for, and a world of people He refused to pray for. In verse 14 He says, "**I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them.**" And in verse 16 He says, "**They are not of the world.**" Then in verses 21 and 25 we still see the world and the saints as two separate groups of people. In John 1:10 John says, "**He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew**

◊ (Continued on page 59)

The World in the

(Continued from page 58) ◊

him not." We know that many believed on Him, but the non-elect world did not know Him.

In Acts 19:27 Demetrius, the silversmith says that all the world worships the goddess Diana. But this world certainly did not include the Lord's people. In Romans 1:8 Paul says, **"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."** Everyone should know that the people in China, India and in America were not going around talking about the faith of the saints at Rome. In Romans 11:12 and 15 we see the fall of the Jews being a blessing to the world. Here it is the world of Gentiles. In I Corinthians 6:2 we read, **"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"** Here the world is the non-elect world.

In Hebrews 11:38 speaking concerning the Lord's people we read, **"Of whom the world was not worthy."** This is also the non-elect world. In James 4:4 we learn **"that the friendship of the world is enmity with God."** This world is made up of God's enemies. In I Corinthians 4:9 Paul speaking concerning the apostles says, **"For we are made a spectacle unto the world."** This world is also made up of our Lord's enemies. And in II Peter 2:5 we see a world that Peter calls **"the world of the ungodly."** This world does not include the Lord's people. Then in I John 3:1 John says, **"Therefore the world knoweth us not."** The non-elect world does not know, or understand the Christian. And in verse 13 John says, **"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."** This world could not include the brethren whom it hates. Then in I John 4:4 John says, **"Ye are of God, little children"** and in verse 5 he says, **"They are of the world."** Here the world does not include the little children. And then in I John 5:19 we read, **"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."** The whole world here does not include the we who are of God.

In Revelation 3:10 we are told that God will keep the church at Philadelphia from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world. All the world here does not include the church at Philadelphia. Then in Revelation 12:9 we see that Satan deceiveth the whole world. But the Lord's people are not deceived by him. That means that the whole world in this verse includes only old Satan's crowd. In John 17:6 no one can say that the men whom the Father had given to Christ and the world out of which they had come are one and the same. And in John 17:23 the world and the them who have Christ dwelling in them cannot be one and the same people. Then in Revelation 13:3 we see all the world wondering after,

or about the beast. But in the next verse we are told that **"they worshipped the dragon."** The dragon is old Satan, so these people can not be the Lord's people.

Up to this point we have pointed out two places in the New Testament where the word "world" means all mankind. Then we have pointed out thirty-six places where no one with a straight face can possibly say this word means everybody. Now let us consider fourteen other places where it is impossible to know the right meaning except in the light of other Scriptures. And if we are not willing to abide by that light we can only give them the meaning we want them to have to make them fit our own theology.

In John 1:29 Jesus is called, **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** Now if this world means all mankind then there is no sin left for anybody to suffer for. But since the majority of mankind ends up in the lake of fire this world simply has to be the elect world. Then in John 3:17 God sent His Son into the world in order that the world might be saved. If all the people in the world were to be saved, God's precious Word would not just be broken, it would be shattered into a thousand pieces. In John 4:42 Jesus is called **"the Saviour of the world."** If He were the Saviour of all mankind, then everybody would be saved and the greater part of the lake of fire would not be occupied.

In John 6:33 Jesus is said to give **"life unto the world."** Since the lost have no spiritual life this world has to be the elect world. In verse 51 He is said to give His flesh for the life of the world. This too can only mean the elect world. In John 8:12 Jesus says He is the light of the world. Since the lost are in spiritual darkness this has to be the elect world. The same goes for John 9:5. In John 12:47 Jesus says He came to save the world. If He came to save all mankind He has proven to be a miserable failure, but Matthew 1:21 says **"He shall save His people from their sins."** So this world can only mean His people. In John 14:31 He says, **"That the world may know that I love the Father--. Arise, let us go hence."** The lost world knows nothing of the Son's love for the Father, so this world is the elect world.

In Romans 3:6 Paul says, **"God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?"** In verse 5 he asks the question, **"Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?"** He takes vengeance on the lost, so this has to be the lost world. In Romans 4:13 Abraham and his seed are to inherit the world. This can only mean the land of Canaan. In Genesis 17:8 God told Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to him and his seed for an everlasting possession. And in Ezekiel 37:25 these people are to live in the land of Canaan forever. The Arabs just as well move out. In II Corinthians 5:19 God is reconciling the world to Himself. The

lost will never be reconciled to God. So this world is made up of the Lord's elect people. In I John 2:2 Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The word "propitiation" means to cover their sins and send them away. The sins of the non-elect have not been covered and sent away, and they never will be. So this is the elect world.

I have deliberately saved John 3:16 until the last. This verse, in all probability, is the most abused, mistreated and misconstrued verse in all the Bible. It is to be feared that 99% of the people called Baptists in the world argue even to a fisticuff that the world in this verse includes all mankind. In the light of the precious Scriptures, why do they do this?? Psalm 5:5 tells us that God hates all workers of iniquity. And it does not say He hates their works. It says He hates the workers. Then in Romans 9:13 God says He hated Esau. So if I say God loves everybody I would be calling Him a liar, and I do not believe He would like it. I can assure you of one thing, and that is, you and I will both stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for the way we have dealt with His precious Word.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Berea Baptist Church of Mantachie, MS will hold the area Fellowship meeting on Saturday April 7th at 10:00 a.m.

Lord willing one of the speakers will be Elder Steve Cornett, pastor of the Westbrook New Teastament Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN.

A noon meal will be provided by the church. All are invited to attend.

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BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 1-1-2007 to 1-31-2007

Beginning Balance	\$5,841.84
RECEIPTS:	
B. C. of Brimfield, Brimfield, IL	33.78
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS	458.36
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL	60.00
Berea M. B.C., Mansfield, OH	100.00
Berea M. B. C., Westpoint, TN	150.00
Bethel M. B. C., Pasadena, TX	100.00
Bible Believers B. C., Naples, ID	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne WV	300.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	175.00
Buffalo Valley B. C., Clay, WV	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL	25.00
Cedar Grove B. C., Millport, AL	100.00
Central Avenue B. C., Tampa, FL	100.00
Faith B. C., Seffner, FL	25.00
Faith M. B. C., Lynn, AR	25.00
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME	20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL	25.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK	35.00
Joseph Jurzec, Richmond, IL	25.00
Leroy Bullard, Albuquerque, NM	200.00
Morris St. B. C., Hobbs, NM	500.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH	100.00
New Testament B. C., Bristol, TN	10.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN	50.00
Ocoonita M. B. C., Keokee, VA	40.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL	100.00
South Park B. C., Seattle, WA	25.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Columbus, MS	50.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Wake Forest, NC	100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Warren, OH	75.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA	25.00
Walnut Creek M. B. C., Centerburg, OH	50.00
Wayne Huffman, McNeil, AR	80.00
Subscriptions	517.00
Anon	339.50
Dividing Checks	259.00
Sub Total	\$4,652.64
TOTAL	\$10,494.48
EXPENDITURES:	
Printing	609.96
Postage	963.43
Wages	2,240.00
FICA	152.95
Dividing Checks	259.00
Supplies	159.73
Total Expenditures	4,385.07
ENDING BALANCE	\$6,109.41


BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report 1-1-2007 to 1-31-2007

Beginning Balance	\$8,754.46
RECEIPTS:	
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY	75.00
Berea M. B. C., West Point, TN	50.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY	100.00
Berea Baptist Banner (Stamps reim.)	117.00
Anon	1000.00
.....	1,342.00
TOTAL	10,096.46
EXPENDITURES:	
Radio Time	360.00
Postage	211.10
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	571.10
.....	\$9,525.36
Interest	+5.14
.....	\$9,530.50
Less Corbin, KY des.	-1,531.52
ENDING BALANCE	\$7,998.98
CORBIN, KENTUCKY REPORT	
Beginning Balance	\$691.52
RECEIPTS:	
Anon	1,000.00
TOTAL	1,691.52
EXPENDITURES:	
WCTT	160.00
ENDING BALANCE	\$1,531.52



WORLD SCENE
By G. Russell Evans USCG (Ret.) - Norfolk, Virginia

Supreme Court Still Hostile to Religion



Whatever in today's world comes down on the side of righteousness or moral stability for our nation, we can depend, in many cases, on The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to sue, the Supreme Court to outlaw and big media to ridicule and misrepresent.

SANTA FE FOOTBALL

A near perfect example was the 6-3 Supreme Court ruling on the ACLU case to outlaw voluntary prayer before high school football games in Santa Fe, Texas. These customary prayers, led by elected student volunteers, focused on good sportsmanship and protection of the young athletes--definitely a righteous and uplifting operation.

"Negatory," said Justice John Paul Stevens. "We know better. Worship is a responsibility and choice for the private sphere," and we mustn't trample on the "constitutional separation of church and state."

This "separation" phrase is an invention of the separatists and no where found in our constitution. The first amendment, as most everyone knows, simply says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Quote from Dr. Gary Scott Smith's article, "The phrase comes instead from a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802, to the Danbury Baptist Association." Justice Hugo Black cited Jefferson's words in a landmark Supreme Court case in 1947. "In the words of Jefferson," wrote Black, the first amendment clause prohibiting "the establishment of religion by law was intended to erect 'a wall of separation between church and state.'"

"Jefferson should not be considered the final authority on the relationship between church and state, although many magically grant him that authority. Views are very important, however, and those who invoke Jefferson's phrase need to take a closer look at what he meant by his oft-quoted phrase as well as his actions as president. In his letter to the Danbury Baptists, Jefferson explained why he, unlike the first two presidents and almost all state governors, did not proclaim days for public prayer, fasting, and thanksgiving. Jefferson argued that the first amendment prohibiting the federal chief magistrate from issuing religious proclamations of any kind. He later explained that both the first amendment, and the tenth amendment, which reserved to the states the powers not delegated to the United States, prevented the federal government from intermeddling with the doctrines, discipline, or exercise" of religious institutions.

"The current effort to exclude religious perspectives and ideals completely from government and ensure a naked, ideologically "neutral" public square is at odds with the views of the founders, the history of our country, and the well-being of our society."

SCHOOL PRAYER HELPED

For 190 years, our country got along just fine with school prayers which have hurt not a soul but, many say, helped immensely in suppressing violence and other lawlessness in our educational system.

Then in 1962, along came the highly educated lawyers, theologians and journalists out of Yale, Harvard and Columbia and other elitist institutions with their socialist mission to remake America. The schools and school-children were vulnerable targets for their brave new world; and the new super-educated and hair-splitting lawyers all superior to other mortals, were happy to take on the task.

COURT PLAYS MUM

Even so, three Supreme Court Justices refused to go along with outlawing these customary prayers before Santa Fe football games. My effort to obtain their names from Ella Hunter of the courts public information office was an exercise in futility.

First, the lady said she didn't know and then hung up on me. When I called back, she promised to mail a copy of the hearing---all in all suggesting that the Supreme Court of the United States may prefer not to bother with nosy taxpayers.

When the court says Santa Fe football players are engaged in "formal prayer" and executing "a government-sponsored religious practice that violates student's rights to worship as they choose," the Justices are stretching

the limits of credibility and making their own law from their high bench position. The constitution is left behind!

PRAYER IN COURT IS OKAY

Asked to justify the Supreme Court practice of opening each session with the appellation, "God save this honorable Court," the rationalization is that it's "customary." So what's wrong with "customary" school prayers---and if Jews, Muslims, Hindus and atheists are offended, offer them equal prayer time.

One editorialist condemns the minute of silence observed today in many schools as "government efforts to foster religion." So do we institute mind control too, i.e., set the boundaries students are allowed to think about? Sure enough, within forty-eight hours of the Santa Fe ruling, the Virginia ACLU sued to overturn the moment of silence as "promoting school prayer." Shame on the ACLU and director Kent Willis---and shame on the Supreme Court if it takes this case!

WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY?

Julie Underwood of the National School Boards Association praised the Santa Fe decision and will now advise local school boards to ban student-led prayers at graduation.

Said Jessica Valenta of Green Run High School, Virginia Beach, "Pre-game prayer is important for me. I really enjoy it!"

Two-thirds of the public want student-led prayers. Three-fourths of students say, "Prayer is an important influence in our lives."

In his Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx calls freedom and justice eternal truths, adding, "But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and morality."

None-the-less, the Supreme Court is continuing its hostility toward religion which peaked with seven anti-religion rulings, the most in the court's 195-year history. A cruel example is the 1985 *Anguilar v. Felton* case in which the court struck down remedial studies that had been worked out between public and parochial schools to benefit 300,000 poor children in New York.

Consequently, these disadvantaged children were denied basic and

fundamental learning by a court determined to show who's boss.

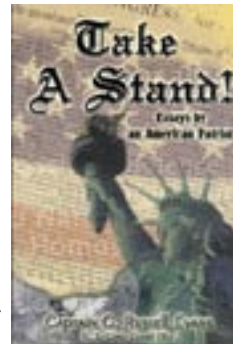
"Believe deep down in your heart that you're destined to do great things" Joe Paterno.

(Excerpts are from previous writings of Capt. Evans).

Longtime Columnist Has Written A Challenging Book

By Shirley A. Stull, CAN

Norfolk, VA - Longtime columnist for the "Berea Baptist Banner" Capt. G. Russell Evans has written a book. The name of the book is "Take A Stand."



The book is a combination of many articles that Capt. Evans has written over the years. I believe the readers of "The Berea Baptist Banner" will be interested in reading this book. Capt. Evans has taken a stand on many subjects in his articles, most of which were quite challenging.

Now in this volume we have a series of essays that will provoke every reader's thinking and, I believe will bring all of us to a fuller understanding of many vital issues.

With liberal groups attempting to seize new territory every day, how should concerned Americans respond to the issues which threaten our nation's heritage and sovereignty?

Capt. G. Russell Evans insists that it's time to lay aside political correctness and take a stand! Addressing a wide range of topics, Evans challenges us to confront religious pacifism, Muslims, and terrorism, illegal immigration, ACLU, United Nations, institutional and media bias, homosexuality, liberal personalities, and a number of other controversial issues.

Capt. G. Russell Evans graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 1935 and the Naval War College in 1948. He saw antisubmarine duty in World War II and is a veteran of six years sea duty and twenty four years aviation duty in sea rescue. He has written prolifically on conservative causes and received the 1999 "Defender of Freedom" award. He was honored at that year's Presidential banquet of the Conservative Political Action Conference. His commentaries have appeared in numerous periodicals, including "The Berea Baptist Banner."

"I have written five books, I have been writing for almost fifty years, including approximately one thousand columns. I have attempted to take a stand on various subjects." ---Capt. Evans.

Editor's Note: Capt. Evan's book can be ordered from the Berea Baptist Church Bookstore. The price of the book is \$9.95 and add \$2.50 for S/H.



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